

*BELL's*  
**BRITISH THEATRE.**

---

CONSISTING OF

*THE MOST ESTEEMED*

**ENGLISH PLAYS.**

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**VOL. XXVIII.**

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CONTAINING

THE DOUBLE DEALER, . . . BY CONGREVE.  
THE OLD BATCHELOR, . . . — CONGREVE.  
HENRY THE SECOND, . . . — HULL.  
PHÆDRA AND HIPPOLITUS, . — SMITH.

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**LONDON:**

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BELL:

# BRITISH THEATRE.

CONSISTING OF

THE MOST ESTEEMED

ENGLISH PLAYS.



LONDON:

GEORGE CANTON, PRINTED AND SOLD BY  
THE AUTHOR, AND UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF  
THE LONDON THEATRE, AND UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF  
THE LONDON THEATRE, AND UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF



THE  
**DOUBLE DEALER.**

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A  
COMEDY,  
  
*BY WILLIAM CONGREVE.*

---

ADAPTED FOR  
THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,  
  
AS PERFORMED AT THE  
*THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.*  
  
REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOK,  
*By Permission of the Manager.*

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The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation.

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**L O N D O N :**

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M DCC XCV.



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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
CHARLES MONTAGUE.

ONE OF THE  
LORDS OF THE TREASURY.

---

S I R,

*I HEARTILY wish this play were as perfect as I intended it, that it might be more worthy your acceptance; and that my Dedication of it to you might be more becoming that honour and esteem which I, with every body who is so fortunate as to know you, have for you. It had your countenance when yet unknown; and now it is made public, it wants your protection.*

*I would not have any body imagine, that I think this play without its faults, for I am conscious of several. I confess I designed (whatever vanity or ambition occasioned that design) to have written a true and regular comedy; but I found it an undertaking which put me in mind of—Sudet multum, frustra que labore et ausus idem. And now to make amends for the vanity of such a design, I do confess both the attempt, and the imperfect performance. Yet I must take the boldness to say, I have not miscarried in the whole; for the mechanical part of it is regular. That I may say with a little vanity, as a builder may say, he has built a house according to the model laid down before him; or a gardener that he has set his flowers in a knot of such or such a figure. I designed the moral first, and to that moral I invented the fable, and do not know that I have borrowed one hint of it any where. I made the plot as strong as I could, because it was single; and I made it single, because I would avoid confusion, and was resolved to preserve the three unities of the drama. Sir, this discourse is very impertinent to you, whose judgment much better can discern the faults, than I can excuse them; and whose good-nature like that of a lover, will find out those hidden beauties (if there are any such) which it would be great immodesty for me to discover. I think I do not speak improperly when I call you*

*a Lover of Poetry; for it is very well known she has been a very kind mistress to you; she has not denied you the last favour, and she has been fruitful to you in a most beautiful issue—If I break off abruptly here, I hope every body will understand that it is to avoid a commendation, which, as it is your due, would be most easy for me to pay, and too troublesome for you to receive.*

*I have, since the acting of this play, hearkened after the objections which have been made to it; for I was conscious where a true critic might have put me upon my defence, I was prepared for the attack; and am pretty confident I could have vindicated some parts, and excused others; and where there were any plain miscarriages, I would most ingenuously have confessed them. But I have not heard any thing said sufficient to provoke an answer. That which looks most like an objection, does not relate in particular to this play, but to all or most that ever have been written; and that is soliloquy. Therefore I will answer it, not only for my own sake, but to save others the trouble, to whom it may hereafter be objected.*

*I grant, that for a man to talk to himself, appears absurd and unnatural; and indeed it is so in most cases: but the circumstances which may attend the occasion make great alteration. It oftentimes happens to a man, to have designs which require him to himself, and in their nature cannot admit of a confident. Such for certain, is all villainy; and other less mischevius intentions may be very improper to be communicated to a second person. In such a case, therefore, the audience must observe whether the person upon the stage takes any notice of them at all, or no. For if he supposes any one to be by, when he talks to himself, it is monstrous and ridiculous to the last degree; nay, not only in this case, but in any part of a play, if there is expressed any knowledge of an audience, it is insufferable. But otherwise, when a man in soliloquy reasons with himself, and pro's and con's, and weighs all his designs, we ought not to imagine that this man either talks to us, or to himself; he is only thinking, and thinking such matter as were inexcusable folly in him to speak. But be-*

cause we are concealed spectators of the plot in agitation, and the poet finds it necessary to let us know the whole mystery of this contrivance, he is willing to inform us of this person's thoughts; and to that end is forced to make use of the expedient of speech, no better way being yet invented for the communication of thought.

Another very wrong objection has been made by some who have not taken leisure to distinguish the characters. The hero of the play, as they are pleased to call him, (meaning Mellefont) is a gull, and made a fool, and cheated. Is every man a gull and a fool that is deceived? At that rate I am afraid the two classes of men will be reduced to one, and the knaves themselves be at a loss to justify their title; but if an open-hearted honest man, who has an entire confidence in one whom he takes to be his friend, and whom he has obliged to be so; and who (to confirm him in his opinion) in all appearance, and upon several trials, has been so; if this man be deceived by the treachery of the other, must he of necessity commence fool immediately, only because the other has proved a villain? Ay, but there was a caution given to Mellefont in the first act, by his friend Careless. Of what nature was that caution? only to give the audience some light into the character of Maskwell before his appearance, and not to convince Mellefont of his treachery; for that was more than Careless was then able to do: he never knew Maskwell guilty of any villainy; he was only a sort of man which he did not like. As for his suspecting his familiarity with my Lady Touchwood, let them examine the answer that Mellefont makes him, and compare it with the conduct of Maskwell's character through the play.

I would beg them again to look into the character of Maskwell before they accuse Mellefont of weakness for being deceived by him. For upon summing up the enquiry into this objection, it may be found they have mistaken cunning in one character for folly in another.

But there is one thing, at which I am more concerned than all the false criticisms that are made upon me; and that is, some of the ladies are offended. I am heartily sorry for it; for I declare I would



rather disoblige all the critics in the world, than one of the fair-sex. They are concerned that I have represented some women vicious and affected: How can I help it? It is the business of a comic poet to paint the vices and follies of human-kind; and there are but two sexes, male and female, men and women, which have a title to humanity: and if I leave one half of them out, the work will be imperfect. I should be very glad of an opportunity to make my compliment to those ladies who are offended; but they can no more expect it in a comedy, than to be tickled by a surgeon when he is letting them blood. They who are virtuous or discreet should not be offended; for such characters as these distinguish them, and make their beauties more shining and observed: and they who are of the other kind, may nevertheless pass for such, by seeming not to be displeased, or touched with the satire of this Comedy. Thus have they also wrongfully accused me of doing them a prejudice, when I have in reality done them a service.

You will pardon me, Sir, for the freedom I take of making answers to other people, in an epistle which ought wholly to be sacred to you: but since I intend the play to be so too, I hope I may take the more liberty of justifying it where it is in the right.

I must now, Sir, declare to the world how kind you have been to my endeavours; for in regard of what was well meant, you have excused what was ill performed. I beg you would continue the same method in your acceptance of this dedication. I know no other way of making a return to that humanity you shewed, in protecting an infant, but by inrolling it in your service, now that it is of age, and come into the world. Therefore, be pleased to accept of this as an acknowledgment of the favour you have shewn me, and an earnest of the real service and gratitude of,

SIR,

Your most obliged,

Humble Servant,

WILLIAM CONGREVE

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*To my dear Friend Mr. CONGREVE, on his Comedy, called,*  
*The DOUBLE DEALER.*

---

WELL then ; the promis'd hour is come at last ;  
The present age of wit obscures the past :  
Strong were our fires, and as they fought they writ,  
Conqu'ring with force of arms, and dint of wit ;  
Theirs was the giant race, before the flood ;  
And thus, when Charles return'd, our empire stood.  
Like Janus, he the stubborn soil manur'd,  
With rules of husbandry the rankness cur'd :  
Tam'd us to manners, when the stage was rude,  
And boist'rous English wit with art endu'd.  
Our age was cultivated thus at length ;  
But what we gain'd in skill we lost in strength.  
Our builders were, with want of genius, curst ;  
The second temple was not like the first :  
'Till you the best Vitruvius come at length,  
Our beauties equal, but excell our strength.  
Firm Doric pillars found your solid base ;  
The fair Corinthian crowns the higher space ;  
Thus all below is strength, and all above is grace.  
In easy dialogue is Fletcher's praise :  
He mov'd the mind, but had no pow'r to raise.  
Great Johnson did by strength of judgment please :  
Yet doubling Fletcher's force, he wants his ease.  
In diff'rent talents both adorn'd their age ;  
One for the study, t'other for the stage.  
But both to Congreve justly shall submit,  
One match'd in judgment, both o'er-match'd in wit.  
In him all beauties of this age we see,  
Etherge's courtship, Southerne's purity ;

The satire, wit, and strength of manly Wycherley.  
All this in blooming youth you have atchiev'd;  
Nor are your foil'd coteremporaries griev'd;  
So much the sweetness of your manners move,  
We cannot envy you, because we love.

Fabius might joy with Scipio, when he saw  
A beardless consul made against the law,  
And join his suffrage to the votes of Rome;  
Though he with Hannibal was overcome.  
Thus old Romano bow'd to Raphael's fame,  
And scholar to the youth he taught, became.

Oh, that your brows my laurel had sustain'd,  
Well had I been depos'd, if you had reign'd!  
The father had descended for the son;  
For only you are lineal to the throne.

Thus when the State one Edward did depose,  
A greater Edward in his room arose.  
But now, not I, but poetry is curs'd,  
For Tom the second reigns, like Tom the first.  
But let them not mistake my patron's part,  
Nor call his charity their own desert.

Yet this I prophecy; thou shalt be seen  
(Tho' with some short parenthesis between)  
High on the throne of wit; and seated there,  
Not mine (that's little) but thy laurel wear.

Thy first attempt an early promise made,  
That early promise this has more than paid,  
So bold, yet so judiciously you dare,  
That your least praise, is to be regular.

Time, place, and action, may with pains be wrought,  
But genius must be born, and never can be taught.

This is your portion ; this your native store ;  
Heav'n, that but once was prodigal before,  
To Shakspeare gave as much ; she could not give him more.  
Maintain your post ; that's all the fame you need ;  
For 'tis impossible you should proceed.  
Already I am worn with cares and age,  
And just abandoning th' ungrateful stage ;  
Unprofitably kept at Heaven's expence,  
I live a rent-charge on his providence :  
But you, whom ev'ry muse and grace adorn,  
Whom I foresee to better fortune born,  
Be kind to my remains ; and oh, defend,  
Against your judgment, your departed friend !  
Let not th' insulting foe my fame pursue ;  
But shade those laurels which descend to you :  
And take for tribute what these lines express :  
You merit more ; nor could my love do less.

JOHN DRYDEN.

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PROLOGUE.

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*MOORS* have this way (as story tells) to know  
Whether their brats are truly got, or no;  
Into the sea the new born babe is thrown,  
There, as instinct directs, to swim or drown.  
A barbarous device, to try if spouse  
Has kept religiously her nuptial vows.

Such are the trials poets make of plays;  
Only they trust to more inconstant seas;  
So does our author, this his child commit  
To the tempestuous mercy of the pit,  
To know if it be truly born of Wit.

Critics, avaunt; for you are fish of prey,  
And feed, like sharks, upon an infant play.  
Be ev'ry monster of the deep away;  
Let's have fair trial, and a clear sea.

Let nature work, and do not damn too soon,  
For life will struggle long, ere it sink down:  
And will at least rise thrice before it drown.  
Let us consider, had it been our fate,  
Thus hardly to be prov'd legitimate!  
I will not say we'd all in danger been,  
Were each to suffer for his mother's sin:  
But by my troth I cannot avoid thinking,  
How nearly some good men might have 'scap'd sinking.  
But, Heav'n be prais'd, this custom is confin'd  
Alone to th' offspring of the muses kind:  
Our Christian cuckolds are more bent to pity;  
I know not one Moor-husband in the city.

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*I th' good man's arms the chopping bastard thrives,  
For he thinks all his own that is his wives.*

*Whatever fate is for this play design'd,  
The poet's sure he shall some comfort find:  
For if his muse has play'd him false, the worst  
That can befall him, is, to be divorc'd;  
You husbands judge, if that be to be curs'd.*

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## Dramatis Personae.

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### COVENT-GARDEN.

#### Men.

MASKWELL, a villain; pretended friend to Mellefont, gallant to Lady Touchwood, and in love with Cynthia,	Mr. Sheridan.
LORD TOUCHWOOD, uncle to Mellefont,	Mr. Clarke.
MELLEFONT, promised to, and in love with Cynthia,	Mr. Wroughton.
CARELESS, his friend,	Mr. Lewis.
LORD FROTH, a solemn coxcomb,	Mr. Booth.
BRISK,	Mr. Woodward.
SIR PAUL PLYANT, an uxorious, foolish, old knight; brother to Lady Touchwood, and father to Cynthia,	Mr. Macklin.

#### Women.

LADY TOUCHWOOD, in love with Mellefont,	Mrs. Jackson.
CYNTHIA, daughter to Sir Paul by a former wife, promised to Mellefont,	Miss Dayes.
LADY FROTH, a great coquet; pretender to poetry, wit, and learning,	Mrs. Mattocks.
LADY PLYANT, insolent to her husband, and easy to any pretender.	Miss Macklin.

Chaplain; Boy, Footmen, and Attendants.

The SCENE, a Gallery in Lord Touchwood's House, with Chambers adjoining.

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7 JU 52

Act III.

THE DOUBLE DEALER.

Scene I



J. W. delin.

A. Kneller sculp.

M. HARLEY or MASKWELL.

— Well, this double-dealing is a jewel.  
Here he comes now for me. —

London. Printed for J. P. O. Smith Library. Swan. 1. May 3. 1736.



*Edw. J. Dwyer del.*

*A. Smith sculp.*

London. Printed for J. Fell English Library. Strand. Apr. 26. 1735.

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## THE DOUBLE DEALER.

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### ACT I. SCENE I.

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*A Gallery in Lord Touchwood's House, with Chambers adjoining.  
Enter CARELESS, crossing the stage, with his hat, gloves, and  
sword in his hands, as just risen from table; MELLEFONT  
following him.*

*Mellefont.*

NED, Ned, whither so fast! What, turn'd flincher! Why, you wo'not leave us?

*Care.* Where are the women? I'm weary of guzzling, and begin to think them the better company.

*Mel.* Then thy reason staggers, and thou'rt almost drunk.

*Care.* No, faith, but your fools grow noisy; and if a man must endure the noise of words without sense, I think the women have more musical voices, and become nonsense better.

*Mel.* Why, they are at the end of the gallery, retired to their tea and scandal, according to their ancient custom after dinner.

——But I made a pretence to follow you, because I had something to say to you in private, and I am not like to have many opportunities this evening.

*Care.* And here's this coxcomb most critically come to interrupt you.

*Enter BRISK.*

*Brisk.* Boys, boys, lads, where are you? What, do you give ground? Mortgage for a bottle, ha? Careless, this is your trick; you are always spoiling company by leaving it.

*Care.* And thou art always spoiling company by coming into it.

*Brisk.* Pooh, ha, ha, ha, I know you envy me. Spite, proud spite, by the gods! and burning envy.—I'll be judged by Mellefont here, who gives and takes raillery better, you or I. Pshaw, man, when I say you spoil company by leaving it, I mean you leave nobody for the company to laugh at. I think there I was with you, ha! Mellefont.

*Mel.* O' my word, Brisk, that was a home thrust—you have silenced him.

*Brisk.* Oh, my dear Mellefont, let me perish if thou art not the soul of conversation, the very essence of wit, and spirit of wine.—The deuce take me, if there were three good things said, or one understood, since thy amputation from the body of our society—He, I think that's pretty and metaphorical enough: 'Egad, I could not have said it out of thy company—Careless, ha!

*Care.* Hum, what is it?

*Brisk.* O, *mon cœur!* What is't! Nay, gad I'll punish you for want of apprehension:—the deuce take me if I tell you.

*Mel.* No, no, hang him, he has no taste—But, dear Brisk, excuse me, I have a little business.

*Care.* Pr'ythee, get thee gone: thou seest we are serious.

*Mel.* We'll come immediately if you'll but go in, and keep up good humour and sense in the company: Pr'ythee do——they'll fall asleep else.

*Brisk.* 'Egad so they will—Well I will, I will; gad you shall command me from the zenith to the nadir.—But the



deuce take me if I say a good thing 'till you come.—But pr'y-thee, dear rogue, make haste, pr'ythee make haste, I shall burst else.—And yonder your uncle, my Lord Touchwood, swears he'll disinherit you, and Sir Paul Plyant threatens to disclaim you for a son-in-law, and my lord Froth won't dance at your wedding to-morrow; nor the deuce take me, I won't write your epithalamium——and see what a condition you're like to be brought to.

*Mel.* Well, I'll speak but three words, and follow you.

*Brisk.* Enough, enough. Careless, bring your apprehension along with you. [Exit.

*Care.* Pert coxcomb.

*Mel.* Faith, 'tis a good-natured coxcomb, and has very entertaining follies——You must be more humane to him; at this juncture it will do me service. I'll tell you, I would have mirth continued this day at any rate; tho' patience purchase folly, and attention be paid with noise. There are times when sense may be unseasonable, as well as truth. Pr'ythee do thou wear none to-day; but allow Brisk to have wit, that thou mayst seem a fool.

*Care.* Why, how now, why this extravagant proposition?

*Mel.* O, I would have no room for serious design, for I am jealous of a plot. I would have noise and impertinence keep my lady Touchwood's head from working: for hell is not more busy than her brain, nor contains more devils than that imaginations.

*Care.* I thought your fear of her had been over——Is not to-morrow appointed for your marriage with Cynthia, and her father sir Paul Plyant come to settle the writings this day, on purpose?

*Mel.* True; but you shall judge whether I have not reason to be alarmed. None besides you and Maskwell are acquainted with the secret of my aunt Touchwood's violent passion for me.

Since my first refusal of her addresses, she has endeavoured to do me all ill offices with my uncle; yet has managed them with that subtilty, that to him they have borne the face of kindness, while her malice, like a dark lanthorn, only shone upon me, where it was directed. Still it gave me less perplexity to prevent the success of her displeasure, than to avoid the importunities of her love; and of two evils, I thought myself favoured in her aversion: but whether urged by her despair, and the short prospect of time she saw, to accomplish her designs; whether the hopes of revenge, or of her love, terminated in the view of this my marriage with Cynthia, I know not; but this morning she surprized me in my bed.——

*Care.* Was there ever such a fury! 'Tis well nature has not put it into her sex's power to ravish.—Well, bless us! proceed. What followed?

*Mel.* What at first amazed me; for I looked to have seen her in all the transports of a slighted and revengeful woman: but when I expected thunder from her voice, and lightning in her eyes, I saw her melted into tears, and hushed into a sigh. It was long before either of us spoke, passion had tied her tongue, and amazement mine.—In short, the consequence was thus: she omitted nothing that the most violent love could urge, or tender words express; which when she saw had no effect, but still I pleaded honour and nearness of blood to my uncle, then came the storm I feared at first; for starting from my bed-side like a fury, she flew to my sword, and with much ado I prevented her doing me or herself a mischief: having disarmed her, in a gust of passion she left me, and in a resolution, confirmed by a thousand curses, not to close her eyes, 'till they had seen my ruin.

*Care.* Exquisite woman! But what the devil does she think thou hast no more sense than to get an heir upon her body to disinherit thyself: for, as I take it, this settlement upon you, is with a proviso that your uncle have no children.

*Mel.* It is so. Well, the service you are to do me will be a pleasure to yourself; I must get you to engage my lady Plyant all this evening, that my pious aunt may not work her to her interest. And if you chance to secure her to yourself, you may incline her to mine. She is handsome, and knows it; is very silly, and thinks she has sense, and has an old fond husband.

*Care.* I confess a very fair foundation for a lover to build upon.

*Mel.* For my lord Froth, he and his wife will be sufficiently taken up with admiring one another, and Brisk's gallantry, as they call it. I'll observe my uncle myself: and Jack Maskwell has promised me to watch my aunt narrowly, and give me notice upon any suspicion. As for sir Paul, my wise father-in-law that is to be, my dear Cynthia has such a share in his fatherly fondness, he would scarce make her a moment uneasy, to have her happy hereafter.

*Care.* So, you have manned your works; but I wish you may not have the weakest guard where the enemy is strongest.

*Mel.* Maskwell, you mean; pr'ythee why should you suspect him?

*Care.* Faith, I cannot help it; you know I never liked him; I am a little superstitious in physiognomy.

*Mel.* He has obligations of gratitude to bind him to me; his dependence upon my uncle is through my means,

*Care.* Upon your aunt, you mean,

*Mel.* My aunt!

*Care.* I am mistaken if there be not a familiarity between them you do not suspect, notwithstanding her passion for you.

*Mel.* Pooh, pooh, nothing in the world but his design to do me service; and he endeavours to be well in her esteem, that he may be able to effect it.

*Care.* Well, I shall be glad to be mistaken: but your aunt's aversion in her revenge cannot be any way so effectually shewn,

as in bringing forth a child to disinherit you. She is handsome and cunning, and naturally wanton. Maskwell is flesh and blood at best, and opportunities between them are frequent. His affection to you, you have confessed, is grounded upon his interest, that you have transplanted; and should it take root in my lady, I do not see what you can expect from the fruit.

*Mel.* I confess the consequence is visible, were your suspicions just.—But see, the company is broke up, let us meet them.

*Enter Lord TOUCHWOOD, Lord FROTH, Sir PAUL PLYANT, and BRISK.*

*Lord T.* Out upon't, nephew—leave your father-in-law, and me, to maintain our ground against young people.

*Mel.* I beg your lordship's pardon—we were just returning.—

*Sir P.* Were you, son? Gadsbud, much better as it is—Good, strange! I swear I'm almost tipsy—t'other bottle would have been too powerful for me—as sure as can be it would.—We wanted your company, but Mr. Brisk—where is he? I swear and vow he's a most facetious person—and the best company.—And my Lord Froth, your lordship is so merry a man, he, he, he.

*Lord F.* O foy, sir Paul, what do you mean? Merry! O barbarous! I'd as lieve you called me fool.

*Sir P.* Nay, I protest and vow now, 'tis true; when Mr. Brisk jokes, your lordship's laugh does so become you, he, he, he.

*Lord F.* Ridiculous! sir Paul, you're strangely mistaken; I find Champagne is powerful. I assure you, sir Paul, I laugh at nobody's jest but my own, or a lady's; I assure you, sir Paul.

*Brisk.* How! how, my lord! What, affront my wit! let me perish, do I never say any thing worthy to be laughed at?

*Lord F.* O foy, don't misapprehend me; I don't say so, for I often smile at your conceptions. But there is nothing more unbecoming a man of quality, than to laugh; 'tis such a vulgar expression of the passion! every body can laugh. Then especially to laugh at the jest of an inferior person, or when any body else of the same quality does not laugh with one. Ridiculous! to be pleased with what pleases the croud! Now, when I laugh, I always laugh alone.

*Brisk.* I suppose that's because you laugh at your own jests, 'egad, ha, ha, ha.

*Lord F.* He, he, I swear tho', your raillery provokes me to a smile.

*Brisk.* Ay, my lord, it's a sign I hit you in the teeth, if you shew 'em.

*Lord F.* He, he, he, I swear that's so very pretty, I can't forbear.

*Care.* I find a quibble bears more sway in your lordship's "face than a jest."

*Lord T.* Sir Paul, if you please we'll retire to the ladies, and drink a dish of tea to settle our heads.

*Sir P.* With all my heart.—Mr. Brisk, you'll come to us—or call me when you joke—I'll be ready to laugh incontinently.

[*Exeunt lord Touch. and sir Paul.*]

*Mel.* But does your lordship never see comedies?

*Lord F.* O yes, sometimes, but I never laugh.

*Mel.* No?

*Lord F.* Oh, no—never laugh indeed, sir.

*Care.* No! Why, what d'ye go there for?

*Lord F.* To distinguish myself from the commonalty, and mortify the poets;—the fellows grow so conceited when any of their foolish wit prevails upon the side-boxes.—I swear—he, he, he, I have often constrained my inclinations to laugh—he, he, he, to avoid giving them encouragement.



*Mel.* You are cruel to yourself, my lord, as well as malicious to them.

*Lord F.* I confess I did myself some violence at first, but now I think I have conquered it.

*Brisk.* Let me perish, my lord, but there is something very particular in the humour; 'tis true, it makes against wit, and I'm sorry for some friends of mine that write, but 'egad, I love to be malicious.—Nay, deuce take me, there's wit in't too—and wit must be foiled by wit; cut a diamond with a diamond, no other way, 'egad.

*Lord F.* Oh, I thought you would not be long before you found out the wit.

*Care.* Wit! In what? Where the devil's the wit in not laughing when a man has a mind to't?

*Brisk.* O lord, why, can't you find it out?—Why, there 'tis, in the not laughing—Don't you apprehend me?—My lord, Careless is a very honest fellow, but hark ye—you understand me, somewhat heavy, a little shallow, or so.—Why, I'll tell you now, suppose now you come up to me—Nay, pr'ythee, Careless, be instructed. Suppose, as I was saying, you come up to me holding your sides, and laughing, as if you would—Well—I look grave, and ask the cause of this immoderate mirth—You laugh on still, and are not able to tell me—Still I look grave, not so much as smile.—

*Care.* Smile, no, what the devil should you smile at, when you suppose I can't tell you?

*Brisk.* Pshaw, pshaw, pr'ythee don't interrupt me.—But I tell you, you shall tell me—at last—but it shall be a great while first.

*Care.* Well; but pr'ythee don't let it be a great while, because I long to have it over.

*Brisk.* Well then, you tell me some good jest, or very witty thing, laughing all the while as if you were ready to die



—and I hear it, and look thus.—would not you be disappointed?

*Care.* No: for if it were a witty thing, I should not expect you to understand it.

*Lord F.* O'foy, Mr. Careless, all the world allows Mr. Brisk to have wit; my wife says he has a great deal. I hope you think her a judge.

*Brisk.* Pooh, my lord, his voice goes for nothing.—I can't tell how to make him apprehend.—Take it t'other way. Suppose I say a witty thing to you?

*Care.* Then I shall be disappointed indeed.

*Mel.* Let him alone, Brisk, he is obstinately bent not to be instructed.

*Brisk.* I'm sorry for him, the deuce take me.

*Mel.* Shall we go to the ladies, my lord?

*Lord F.* With all my heart;—methinks we are a solitude without them.

*Mel.* Or, what say you to another bottle of champagne?

*Lord F.* O, for the universe, not a drop more, I beseech you. Oh, intemperate! I have a flushing in my face already.

[*Takes out a pocket glass, and looks in it.*]

*Brisk.* Let me see, let me see, my lord, I broke my glass that was in the lid of my snuff-box. Hum! deuce take me, I have encouraged a pimple here too.

[*Takes the glass, and looks.*]

*Lord F.* Then you must mortify him with a patch; my wife shall supply you. Come, gentlemen, *allons*, here is company coming.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter Lady TOUCHWOOD and MASKWELL.*

*Lady T.* I'll hear no more—Y'are false and ungrateful; come, I know you false.

*Mask.* I have been frail I confess, madam, for your ladyship's service.

*Lady T.* That I should trust a man whom I had known betray his friend!

*Mask.* What friend have I betrayed? Or to whom?

*Lady T.* Your fond friend Mellefont, and to me——Can you deny it?

*Mask.* I do not.

*Lady T.* Have you not wronged my lord, who has been a father to you in your wants, and given you being? Have you not wronged him in the highest manner, in his bed?

*Mask.* With your ladyship's help, and for your service, as I told you before. I cannot deny that neither. Any thing more, madam?

*Lady T.* More! audacious villain. Oh, what's more is most my shame——Have you not dishonoured me?

*Mask.* No, that I deny; for I never told in all my life: so that accusation's answered.——On to the next.

*Lady T.* Death, do you dally with my passion? Insolent devil! but have a care——provoke me not; for, by the eternal fire, you shall not escape my vengeance.——Calm villain! how unconcerned he stands, confessing treachery and ingratitude! Is there a vice more black!——Oh, I have excuses, thousands, for my faults; fire in my temper, passions in my soul, apt to every provocation; oppressed at once with love and with despair: but a sedate, a thinking villain, whose black blood runs temperately bad, what excuse can clear?

*Mask.* Will you be in temper, madam? I would not talk not to be heard. I have been [*She walks about disordered.*] a very great rogue for your sake, and you reproach me with it; I am ready to be a rogue still, to do you service; and you are flinging conscience and honour in my face, to rebate my inclinations. How am I to behave myself? You know I am your creature, my life and fortune in your power; to disoblige you brings me certain ruin. Allow it, I would betray you, I would not be a

traitor to myself: I do not pretend to honesty, because you know I am a rascal: but I would convince you from the necessity of my being firm to you.

*Lady T.* Necessity, impudence! Can no gratitude incline you, no obligations touch you? "Have not my fortune and my person been subjected to your pleasure?" Were you not in the nature of a servant, and have not I in effect made you lord of all, of me, and of my lord? Where is that humble love, the languishing, that adoration, which once was paid me, and everlastingly engaged?

*Mask.* Fixed, rooted in my heart, whence nothing can remove them, yet you——

*Lady T.* Yet, what yet?

*Mask.* Nay, misconceive me not, madam, when I say I have had a generous and a faithful passion, which you had never favoured but through revenge and policy.

*Lady T.* Ha!

*Mask.* Look you, madam, we are alone,—Pray contain yourself, and hear me. You know you loved your nephew when I first sighed for you; I quickly found it; an argument that I loved: for with that art you veiled your passion, 'twas imperceptible to all but jealous eyes. This discovery made me bold, I confess it; for by it I thought you in my power. Your nephew's scorn of you added to my hopes; I watched the occasion, and took you, just repulsed by him, warm at once with love and indignation; your disposition, my arguments, and happy opportunity, accomplished my design; I prest the yielding minute, and was blest. How I have loved you since, words have not shewn, then how should words express?

*Lady T.* Well, mollifying devil!—And have I not met your love with forward fire?

*Mask.* Your zeal I grant was ardent, but misplaced; there was revenge in view; that woman's idol had defiled the temple

of the god, and love was made a mock-worship.—A son and heir would have edged young Mellefont upon the brink of ruin, and left him none but you to catch at for prevention.

*Lady T.* Again, provoke me ! Do you wind me like a larum, only to rouse my stilled soul for your diversion ? Confusion !

*Mask.* Nay, madam, I am gone, if you relapse—What needs this ? I say nothing but what you yourself, in open hours of love, have told me. Why should you deny it ? Nay, how can you ? Is not all this present heat owing to the same fire ? Do you not love him still ? How have I this day offended you, but in not breaking off his match with Cynthia ? which, ere to-morrow, shall be done——had you but patience.

*Lady T.* How, what said you, Maskwell—Another caprice to unwind my temper ?

*Mask.* By Heaven, no ; I am your slave, the slave of all your pleasures ; and will not rest 'till I have given you peace, would you suffer me.

*Lady T.* Oh, Maskwell, in vain do I disguise me from thee, thou knowest me, knowest the very inmost windings “ and recesses ” of my soul.—“ Oh, Mellefont ! I burn : ” married to-morrow ! Despair strikes me ! Yet my soul knows I hate him too : let him but once be mine, “ and next immediate ruin “ seize him.”

*Mask.* Compose yourself, you shall possess and ruin him too—Will that please you ?

*Lady T.* How, how ? thou dear, thou precious villain, how ?

*Mask.* You have already been tampering with my lady Plyant.

*Lady T.* I have ; she is ready for any impression I think fit.

*Mask.* She must be thoroughly persuaded that Mellefont loves her.

*Lady T.* She is so credulous that way naturally, and likes

him so well, that she will believe it faster than I can persuade her. But I don't see what you can propose from such a trifling design; for her first conversing with Mellefont will convince her of the contrary.

*Mask.* I know it—I don't depend upon it.—But it will prepare something else; and gain us leisure to lay a stronger plot.—If I gain a little time, I shall not want contrivance.

*One minute gives invention to destroy,*

*What to rebuild, will a whole age employ.* [Exeunt.

ACT II. SCENE I.

*Enter Lady FROTH and CYNTHIA.*

*Cynthia.*

INDEED, Madam! Is it possible your ladyship could have been so much in love?

*Lady F.* I could not sleep; I did not sleep one wink for three weeks together.

*Cyn.* Prodigious! I wonder want of sleep, and so much love, and so much wit as your ladyship has, did not turn your brain.

*Lady F.* O my dear Cynthia, you must not rally your friend—but really, as you say, I wonder too—but then I had a way. For between you and I, I had whimsies and vapours, but I gave them vent.

*Cyn.* How, pray Madam?

*Lady F.* O, I writ, writ abundantly—Do you never write?

*Cyn.* Write, what?

*Lady F.* Songs, elegies, satires, encomiums, panegyricks, lampoons, plays, or heroic poems.

*Cyn.* O lord, not I, Madam; I am content to be a courteous reader.



*Lady F.* O inconsistent! in love and not write! If my lord and I had been both of your temper, we had never come together—O bless me! what a sad thing would that have been, if my lord and I should never have met!

*Cyn.* Then neither my lord nor you would ever have met with your match, on my conscience.

*Lady F.* O' my conscience no more we should; thou say'st right—for sure my lord Froth is as fine a gentleman, and as much a man of quality! Ah! nothing at all of the common air—I think I may say he wants nothing but a blue ribband and a star, to make him shine the very phosphorus of our hemisphere. Do you understand those two hard words? if you don't, I'll explain them to you.

*Cyn.* Yes, yes, madam, I am not so ignorant.—At least I won't own it, to be troubled with your instructions. [*Aside.*

*Lady F.* Nay, I beg your pardon; but being derived from the Greek, I thought you might have escaped the etymology.—But I am the more amazed, to find you a woman of letters and not write! bless me! how can Mellefont believe you love him?

*Cyn.* Why faith, Madam, he that won't take my word, shall never have it under my hand.

*Lady F.* I vow Mellefont's a pretty gentleman, but methinks he wants a manner.

*Cyn.* A manner! what's that, madam?

*Lady F.* Some distinguishing quality, as for example, the *bel air* or *brilliant* of Mr. Brisk; the solemnity, yet complaisance of my lord, or something of his own that should look a little *je ne sçai quoi*; he is too much a mediocrity in my mind.

*Cyn.* He does not indeed affect either pertness or formality, for which I like him—here he comes.



*Enter Lord Froth, Mellefont, and Brisk.*

Impertinent creature! I could almost be angry with her now.

*[Aside.*

*Lady F.* My lord, I have been telling Cynthia how much I have been in love with you; I swear I have; I'm not ashamed to own it now: Ah! it makes my heart leap, I vow I sigh when I think on't:—My dear lord! ha, ha, ha, do you remember, my lord?

*[Squeezes him by the hand, looks kindly on him, sighs, and then laughs out.*

*Lord F.* Pleasant creature! perfectly well, ah! that look! ay, there it is; who could resist!—'Twas so my heart was made a captive at first, and ever since it has been in love with happy slavery.

*Lady F.* O that tongue, that dear deceitful tongue! that charming softness in your mien and your expression, and then your bow! good my lord, bow as you did when I gave you my picture; here, suppose this my picture—*[Gives him a pocket glass.]* Pray mind, my lord; ah! he bows charmingly. Nay, my lord, you shan't kiss it so much; I shall grow jealous, I vow now.

*[He bows profoundly low, then kisses the glass.*

*Lord F.* I saw myself there, and kissed it for your sake.

*Lady F.* Ah! gallantry to the last degree—Mr. Brisk, you are a judge; was ever any thing so well bred as my lord?

*Brisk.* Never any thing but your ladyship, let me perish.

*Lady F.* O prettily turned again; let me die but you have a great deal of wit.—Mr. Mellefont, don't you think Mr. Brisk has a world of wit?

*Mel.* O yes, Madam.

*Brisk.* O dear, madam——

*Lady F.* An infinite deal!

*Brisk.* Oh Heavens, madam——

*Lady F.* More wit than any body.

*Brisk.* I am everlastingly your humble servant, deuce take me, madam.

*Lord F.* Don't you think us a happy couple?

*Cyn.* I vow, my lord, I think you the happiest couple in the world; "for you are not only happy in one another and when you are together, but happy in yourselves and by yourselves."

*Lord F.* I hope Mellefont will make a good husband too.

*Cyn.* 'T is my interest to believe he will, my lord.

*Lord F.* D'ye think he'll love you as well as I do my wife? I am afraid not.

*Cyn.* I believe he'll love me better.

*Lord F.* Heav'ns that can never be; but why do you think so?

*Cyn.* Because he has not so much reason to be fond of himself.

*Lord F.* O your humble servant for that, dear madam. Well, Mellefont, you'll be a happy creature.

*Mel.* Ay, my lord, I shall have the same reason for my happiness that your lordship has; I shall think myself happy.

*Lord F.* Ah, that's all.

*Brisk.* [To *Lady Froth.*] Your ladyship is in the right; but 'egad I'm wholly turned into satire. I confess I write but seldom, but when I do—keen Iambics, 'egad. But my lord was telling me, your ladyship had made an essay toward an heroic poem.

*Lady F.* Did my lord tell you? yes, I vow, and the subject is my lord's love to me. And what do you think I call it? I dare swear you won't guess—*The Sillabub*, ha, ha, ha.

*Brisk.* Because my lord's title's *Froth*, 'egad; ha, ha, ha, deuce take me, very *à propos*, and surprizing, ha, ha, ha.

*Lady F.* He, ay, is not it?—And then I call my lord *Spumosa*; and myself, what do you think I call myself?

*Brisk.* Laftilla, may be—'egad I cannot tell.

*Lady F.* Biddy, that's all; just my own name.

*Brisk.* Biddy! 'egad very pretty—deuce take me if your ladyship has not the art of surprizing the most naturally in the world—I hope you'll make me happy in communicating the poem.

*Lady F.* O, you must be my confidant, I must ask your advice.

*Brisk.* I'm your humble servant, let me perish—I presume your ladyship has read Bossu?

*Lady F.* O yes, and Rapine, and Dacier upon Aristotle and Horace.—My lord you must not be jealous, I'm communicating all to Mr. Brisk.

*Lord F.* No, no, I'll allow Mr. Brisk; have you nothing about you to shew him, my dear?

*Lady F.* Yes, I believe I have.—Mr. Brisk, come will you go into the next room, and there I'll shew you what I have.

[*Exeunt Lady Froth and Brisk.*]

*Lord F.* I'll walk a turn in the garden, and come to you.

[*Exit Lord Froth.*]

*Mel.* You are thoughtful, Cynthia.

*Cyn.* I am thinking, tho' marriage makes man and wife one flesh, it leaves them still two fools; and they become more conspicuous by setting off one another.

*Mel.* That's only when two fools meet and their follies are opposed.

*Cyn.* Nay, I have known two wits meet, and by the opposition of their wit, render themselves as ridiculous as fools. 'Tis an old game we are going to play at; what think you of drawing stakes, and giving over in time?

*Mel.* No, hang it, that's not endeavouring to win, because it is possible we may lose; since we have shuffled and cut, let's e'en turn up trump now.

*Cyn.* Then I find it is like cards, if either of us have a good hand it is an accident of fortune.

*Mel.* No, marriage is rather like a game at bowls: fortune indeed makes the match, and the two nearest, and sometimes the two farthest are together, but the game depends entirely upon judgment.

*Cyn.* Still it is a game, and consequently one of us must be a loser.

*Mel.* Not at all; only a friendly trial of skill, and the winnings to be laid out in an entertainment.—“What’s here, the music!—Oh, my lord has promised the company a new song, we’ll get them to give it us by the way. [*Musicians crossing the stage.*] Pray let us have the favour of you, to practise the song before the company hear it.

SONG.

“ Cynthia frowns whene’er I woo her,  
“ Yet she’s vex’d if I give over;  
“ Much she fears I should undo her,  
“ But much more to lose her lover:  
“ Thus, in doubting, she refuses;  
“ And not winning, thus she loses.

“ Pr’ythee, Cynthia, look behind you,  
“ Age and wrinkles will o’ertake you:  
“ Then too late desire will find you,  
“ When the power must forsake you:  
“ Think, O think o’ th’ sad condition,  
“ To be past, yet want fruition.”

*Mel.* You shall have my thanks below.

[*To the music—they go out.*

*Enter Sir PAUL PLYANT and Lady PLYANT.*

*Sir P.* Gads bud! I am provoked into a fermentation, as my lady Froth says; was ever the like read of in story?

*Lady P.* Sir Paul, have patience; let me alone to rattle him up.

*Sir P.* Pray your ladyship give me leave to be angry—I'll rattle him up, I warrant you, I'll firk him with a *certiorari*.

*Lady P.* You firk him! I'll firk him myself. Pray, sir Paul, hold you contented.

"*Cyn.* Bless me, what makes my father in such a passion!  
"—I never saw him thus before."

*Sir P.* Hold yourself contented, my lady Plyant,—I find passion coming upon me by inflation, and I cannot submit as formerly, therefore give way.

*Lady P.* How now! will you be pleased to retire, and—

*Sir P.* No marry will I not be pleased; I am pleased to be angry, that's my pleasure at this time.

*Mel.* What can this mean!

*Lady P.* Gads my life, the man's distracted; why how now, who are you? What am I? Slidikins, can't I govern you? What did I marry you for? Am I not to be absolute and uncontrollable? Is it fit a woman of my spirit and conduct should be contradicted in a matter of this concern!

*Sir P.* It concerns me, and only me:—Besides, I am not to be governed at all times. When I am in tranquillity my Lady Plyant shall command Sir Paul; but when I am provoked to fury, I cannot incorporate with patience and reason,—as soon may tigers match with tigers, lambs with lambs, and every creature couple with its foe, as the poet says.—

*Lady P.* He's hot-headed still! 'tis in vain to talk to you; but remember I have a curtain-lecture for you, you disobedient, headstrong brute.



*Sir P.* No, 'tis because I won't be headstrong, because I won't be a brute, and have my head fortified, that I am thus exasperated.—But I will protect my honour, and yonder is the violater of my fame.

*Lady P.* 'Tis my honour that is concerned, and the violation was intended to me.—Your honour! you have none but what is in my keeping, and I can dispose of it when I please—therefore don't provoke me.

*Sir P.* Hum, gads-bud she says true—Well, my lady, march on, I will fight under you then; I am convinced as far as passion will permit.

[*Lady Plyant and Sir Paul come up to Mellefont.*

*Lady P.* Inhuman and treacherous——

*Sir P.* Thou serpent, and first tempter of womankind——

*Cyn.* Bless me, sir! madam, what mean you?

*Sir P.* Thy, thy, come away, thy, touch him not; come hither, girl, go not near him, there is nothing but deceit about him; snakes are in his peruke, and the crocodile of Nilus is in his belly, he will eat thee up alive.

*Lady P.* Dishonourable, impudent creature!

*Mel.* For Heaven's sake, madam, to whom do you direct this language?

*Lady P.* Have I behaved myself with all the decorum and nicety, befitting the person of sir Paul's wife? Have I preserved my honour as it were in a snow-house for these three years past? Have I been white and unsullied even by sir Paul himself?

*Sir P.* Nay, she has been an invincible wife, even to me, that's the truth on't.

*Lady P.* Have I, I say, preserved myself like a fair sheet of paper for you to make a blot upon?

*Sir P.* And she shall make a simile with any woman in England.

*Mel.* I am so amazed, I know not what to say.



*Sir P.* Do you think my daughter, this pretty creature; gads-bud she's a wife for a cherubin! Do you think her fit for nothing but to be a stalking-horse, to stand before you while you take aim at my wife? Gads-bud I was never angry before in my life, and I'll never be appeased again.

*Mel.* Hell and damnation! this is my aunt; such malice can be engendered no where else. [*Aside.*

*Lady P.* Sir Paul, take Cynthia from his sight; leave me to strike him with the remorse of his intended crime.

*Cyn.* Pray, sir, stay, hear him, I dare affirm he's innocent.

*Sir P.* Innocent! Why, hark'ee, come hither, Thy, hark'ee, I had it from his aunt, my sister Touchwood—Gads-bud, he does not care a farthing for any thing of thee, but thy portion; why, he's in love with my wife; he would have tantalized thee, and made a cuckold of thy poor father,—and that would certainly have broke my heart—I am sure if ever I should have horns, they would kill me; they would never come kindly, I should die of them, like a child that was cutting his teeth—I should indeed, Thy—therefore come away; but Providence has prevented all, therefore come away when I bid you.

*Cyn.* I must obey. [*Exeunt Sir Paul and Cynthia.*

*Lady P.* Oh, such a thing! the impiety of it startles me—to wrong so good, so fair a creature, and one that loves you tenderly—'T is a barbarity of barbarities, and nothing could be guilty of it—

*Mel.* But the greatest villain imagination can form, I grant it; and next to the villany of such a fact, is the villany of aspersing me with the guilt. How? Which way was I to wrong her? For yet I understand you not.

*Lady P.* Why, gads my life, cousin Mellefont, you cannot be so peremptory as to deny it, when I tax you with it to your face; for, now sir Paul is gone, you are *corum nobis*.

*Mel.* By Heaven I love her more than life, or——

*Lady P.* Fiddle, fiddle, don't tell of this and that, and every thing in the world, but give me mathemacular demonstration, answer me directly——But I have not patience——Oh! the impiety of it, as I was saying, and the unparalleled wickedness! O, merciful father! How could you think to reverse nature so, to make the daughter the means of procuring the mother?

*Mel.* The daughter to procure the mother!

*Lady P.* Ay, for though I am not Cynthia's own mother, I am her father's wife, and that's near enough to make it incest.

*Mel.* Incest! O my precious aunt, and the devil in conjunction.

[*Aside.*

*Lady P.* O reflect upon the horror of that, and then the guilt of deceiving every body; marrying the daughter only to make a cuckold of the father; and then seducing me, debauching my purity, and perverting me from the road of virtue, in which I have trod thus long, and never made one trip, not one *faux pas*; O consider it, what would you have to answer for, if you should provoke me to frailty? Alas! humanity is feeble, Heaven knows! very feeble, and unable to support itself.

*Mel.* Where am I? Is it day? and am I awake? Madam——

*Lady P.* And nobody knows how circumstances may happen together;——to my thinking, now I could resist the strongest temptation——but yet I know, 't is impossible for me to know whether I could or not; there's no certainty in the things of this life.

*Mel.* Madam, pray give me leave to ask you one question——

*Lady P.* O lord, ask me the question! I'll swear I'll refuse it; I swear I'll deny it——therefore don't ask me; nay you shan't ask me, I swear I'll deny it. O Gemini, you have brought all the blood into my face; I warrant I am as red as a turkey-cock; O fye, cousin Mellefont.

*Mel.* Nay, madam, hear me; I mean——

*Lady P.* Hear you, no, no; I'll deny you first, and hear you afterwards. For one does not know how one's mind may change upon hearing.—Hearing is one of the senses, and all the senses are fallible; I won't trust my honour, I assure you; my honour is infallible and uncomatible.

*Mel.* For Heaven's sake, madam.

*Lady P.* O name it no more—Bless me, how can you talk of Heaven, and have so much wickedness in your heart? May be you do n't think it a sin,—they say some of you gentlemen do n't think it a sin—may be it is no sin to them that do n't think it so; indeed, if I did not think it a sin—but still my honour, if it were no sin—but then to marry my daughter for the conveniency of frequent opportunities—I'll never consent to that; as sure as can be I'll break the match.

*Mel.* Death and amazement—madam, upon my knees—

*Lady P.* Nay, nay, rise up; come, you shall see my good-nature. I know love is powerful, and nobody can help his passion: 'tis not your fault, nor I swear it is not mine.—How can I help it if I have charms? And how can you help it if you are made a captive? I swear it is pity it should be a fault—but my honour—well, but your honour too—but the sin!—well, but the necessity—O lord, here's somebody coming, I dare not stay.—Well, you must consider of your crime, and strive as much as can be against it—strive, be sure—but do n't be melancholic, do n't despair—but never think that I'll grant you any thing; O lord, no;—but be sure you lay aside all thoughts of the marriage; for though I know you do n't love Cynthia, only as a blind for your passion to me, yet it will make me jealous—O lord, what did I say? Jealous! no, no, I can't be jealous, for I must not love you—therefore don't hope—but do n't despair neither—O, they're coming, I must fly. [*Exit.*]

*Mel.* [*After a pause.*] So then—spite of my care and foresight I am caught, caught in my security.—Yet this was but a

shallow artifice, "unworthy of my machiavelian aunt." There must be more behind, this is but the first flash, the priming of her engine; destruction follows hard, if not most presently prevented.

*Enter MASKWELL.*

Maskwell, welcome, thy presence is a view of land, appearing to my shipwrecked hopes; the witch has raised the storm, and her ministers have done their work; you see the vessels are parted.

*Mask.* I know it; I met sir Paul towing away Cynthia. Come, trouble not your head, I'll join you together ere to-morrow morning, or drown between you in the attempt.

*Mel.* There's comfort in a hand stretched out to one that's sinking, though never so far off.

*Mask.* No sinking, nor no danger—Come, cheer up; why you don't know that while I plead for you, your aunt has given me a retaining fee;—nay, I am your greatest enemy, and she does but journey-work under me.

*Mel.* Ha! how's this?

*Mask.* What do ye think of my being employed in the execution of all her plots? Ha, ha, ha, by Heaven it is true; I have undertaken to break the match, I have undertaken to make your uncle disinherit you, to get you turned out of doors, and to—ha, ha, ha, I can't tell you for laughing—Oh, she has opened her heart to me—I am to turn you a grazing, and to—ha, ha, ha, marry Cynthia myself; there's a plot for you.

*Mel.* Ha! O see, I see my rising sun! light breaks through clouds upon me, and I shall live in day—O, my Maskwell! how shall I thank or praise thee; thou hast outwitted woman.—But tell me, how couldst thou thus get into her confidence? Ha! how? But was it her contrivance to persuade my lady Plyant into this extravagant belief?

*Mask.* It was, and to tell you the truth I encouraged it for your diversion; though it make you a little uneasy for the present, yet the reflection of it must needs be entertaining—I warrant she was very violent at first.

*Mel.* Ha, ha, ha, ay, a very fury; but I was most afraid of her violence at last—If you had not come as you did, I don't know what she might have attempted.

*Mask.* Ha, ha, ha, I know her temper.—Well, you must know then, that all my contrivances were but bubbles; 'till at last I pretended to have been long secretly in love with Cynthia; that did my business; that convinced your aunt I might be trusted; since it was as much my interest as hers to break the match: then, she thought my jealousy might qualify me to assist her in her revenge. And, in short, in that belief told me the secrets of her heart. At length, we made this agreement, if I accomplish her designs (as I told you before) she has engaged to put Cynthia with all her fortune into my power.

*Mel.* She is most gracious in her favour.—Well, and dear Jack, how hast thou contrived?

*Mask.* I would not have you stay to hear it now: for I don't know but she may come this way; I am to meet her anon; after that, I'll tell you the whole matter; be here in this gallery an hour hence, by that time I imagine our consultation may be over.

*Mel.* I will; 'till then success attend thee.

[Exit.

*Mask.* 'Till then success will attend me; for when I meet you I meet the only obstacle to my fortune. Cynthia, let thy beauty gild my crimes; and whatsoever I commit of treachery or deceit shall be imputed to me as a merit—Treachery, what treachery? Love cancels all the bonds of friendship, and sets men right upon their first foundations. Duty to kings, piety to parents, gratitude to benefactors, and fidelity to friends, are different and particular ties; but the name of rival cuts them all



asunder, and is a general acquittance—Rival is equal, and Love, like Death, an universal leveller of mankind. Ha! but is there not such a thing as honesty? Yes, and whosoever has it about him, bears an enemy in his breast; for your honest man, as I take it, is that nice, scrupulous, conscientious person who will cheat nobody but himself; such another coxcomb as your wise man, who is too hard for all the world, and will be made a fool of by nobody but himself. Ha, ha, ha; well, for wisdom and honesty, give me cunning and hypocrisy; Oh, 'tis such a pleasure to angle for fair-faced fools!—Then that hungry gudgeon Credulity will bite at any thing—Why, let me see, I have the same face, the same words and accents when I speak what I do think, and when I speak what I do not think—the very same—and dear dissimulation is the only art not to be known from nature.

*Why will mankind be fools, and be deceiv'd?  
And why are friends' and lovers' oaths believ'd?  
When each who searches strictly his own mind,  
May so much fraud and power of baseness find.* [Exit.

ACT III. SCENE I.

*Enter Lord TOUCHWOOD, and Lady TOUCHWOOD.*

*Lady Touchwood.*

My lord, can you blame my brother Plyant, if he refuse his daughter upon this provocation? The contract is void by this unheard of impiety.

*Lord T.* I don't believe it true; he has better principles—pho, 'tis nonsense. Come, come, I know my lady Plyant has a large eye, and would centre every thing in her own circle;



't is not the first time she has mistaken respect for love, and made sir Paul jealous of the civility of an undesigning person, the better to bespeak his security in her unfeigned pleasures.

*Lady T.* You censure hardly, my lord; my sister's honour is very well known.

*Lord T.* Yes, I believe I know some that have been familiarly acquainted with it. This is a little trick wrought by some pitiful contriver, envious of my nephew's merit.

*Lady T.* Nay, my lord, it may be so, and I hope it will be found so: but that will require some time; for, in such a case as this, demonstration is necessary.

*Lord T.* There should have been demonstration of the contrary too before it had been believed——

*Lady T.* So I suppose there was.

*Lord T.* How? Where? When?

*Lady T.* That I can't tell; nay, I don't say there was—I am willing to believe as favourably of my nephew as I can.

*Lord T.* I don't know that.

[*Half aside.*]

*Lady T.* How? Don't you believe that, say you, my lord?

*Lord T.* No, I don't say so—I confess I am troubled to find you so cold in his defence.

*Lady T.* His defence! Bless me, would you have me defend an ill thing?

*Lord T.* You believe it then?

*Lady T.* I don't know; I am very unwilling to speak my thoughts in any thing that may be to my cousin's disadvantage; besides, I find, my lord, you are prepared to receive an ill impression from any opinion of mine which is not consenting with your own: but since I am like to be suspected in the end, and 't is a pain any longer to dissemble, I own it to you; in short I do believe it, nay, and can believe any thing worse, if it were laid to his charge——Don't ask me my reasons, my lord, for they are not fit to be told you.

*Lord T.* I am amazed! Here must be something more than ordinary in this. [*Aside.*] Not fit to be told me, madam? You can have no interest wherein I am not concerned, and consequently the same reasons ought to be convincing to me, which create your satisfaction or disquiet.

*Lady T.* But those which cause my disquiet I am willing to have remote from your hearing. Good my lord, don't press me.

*Lord T.* Don't oblige me to press you.

*Lady T.* Whatever it was, 'tis past; and that is better to be unknown which cannot be prevented; therefore, let me beg you to rest satisfied.——

*Lord T.* When you have told me, I will——

*Lady T.* You won't.

*Lord T.* By my life, my dear, I will.

*Lady T.* What if you cannot.

*Lord T.* How? Then I must know; nay, I will. No more trifling—I charge you tell me—By all our mutual peace to come; upon your duty——

*Lady T.* Nay, my lord, you need say no more to make me lay my heart before you, but don't be thus transported; compose yourself; it is not of concern to make you lose one minute's temper; 'tis not, indeed, my dear.—“Nay, by this kiss you “shan't be angry.” O lord, I wish I had not told you any thing—Indeed, my lord, you have frightened me. Nay, look pleased, I'll tell you.

*Lord T.* Well, well.

*Lady T.* Nay, but will you be calm?—Indeed it is nothing but——

*Lord T.* But what?

*Lady T.* But will you promise me not to be angry?—Nay, you must—not to be angry with Mellefont—I dare swear he's sorry—and were it to do again, would not——

*Lord T.* Sorry, for what? 'Death, you rack me with delay.

*Lady T.* Nay, no great matter, only—Well, I have your promise—pho, why nothing, only your nephew had a mind to amuse himself sometimes with a little gallantry towards me. Nay, I can't think he meant any thing seriously, but methought it looked oddly.

*Lord T.* Confusion and hell, what do I hear!

*Lady T.* Or, may be, he thought he was not enough akin to me upon your account, and had a mind to create a nearer relation on his own; a lover, you know, my lord—ha, ha, ha. Well, but that's all—"Now you have it;" well, remember your promise, my lord, and don't take any notice of it to him.

*Lord T.* No, no, no—Damnation!

*Lady T.* Nay, I swear you must not—A little harmless mirth—only misplaced, that's all.—But if it were more 'tis over now, and all is well. For my part, I have forgot it; and so has he, I hope—for I have not heard any thing from him these two days.

*Lord T.* These two days! Is it so fresh? Unnatural villain! 'Death, I'll have him stripped and turned naked out of my doors this moment, and let him rot and perish, incestuous brute!

*Lady T.* Oh, for Heaven's sake, my lord, you'll ruin me if you take such public notice of it, it will be a town-talk: consider your own and my honour—Nay, I told you, you would not be satisfied when you knew it.

*Lord T.* Before I've done I will be satisfied. Ungrateful monster! How long?

*Lady T.* Lord, I don't know:—I wish my lips had grown together when I told you—Almost a twelvemonth—Nay, I won't tell you any more 'till you are yourself. Pray, my lord, don't let the company see you in this disorder—Yet I confess,

I cannot blame you ; for I think I was never so surprized in my life—Who would have thought my nephew could have so misconstrued my kindness—But will you go into your closet, and recover your temper. I'll make an excuse of sudden business to the company, and come to you. Pray, good dear my lord, let me beg you do now: I'll come immediately, and tell you all——Will you, my lord ?

*Lord T.* I will—I am mute with wonder.

*Lady T.* Well, but go now, here is somebody coming.

*Lord T.* Well, I go—You wo n't stay, for I would hear more of this. [Exit.

*Lady T.* I follow, instantly——So.

*Enter MASKWELL.*

*Mask.* This was a master-piece, and did not need my help—though I stood ready for a cue to come in and confirm all, had there been occasion.

*Lady T.* Have you seen Mellefont ?

*Mask.* I have ; and am to meet him here about this time.

*Lady T.* How does he bear his disappointment ?

*Mask.* Secure in my assistance, he seemed not much afflicted, but rather laughed at the shallow artifice, which so little time must of necessity discover. Yet he is apprehensive of some farther design of yours, and has engaged me to watch you. I believe he will hardly be able to prevent your plot, yet I would have you use caution and expedition.

*Lady T.* Expedition indeed ; for all we do must be performed in the remaining part of this evening, and before the company break up, lest my lord should cool, and have an opportunity to talk with him privately——My lord must not see him again.

*Mask.* By no means ; therefore you must aggravate my lord's displeasure to a degree that will admit of no conference with him.——What think you of mentioning me ?

*Lady T.* How?

*Mask.* To my lord, as having been privy to Mellefont's design upon you, but still using my utmost endeavours to dissuade him: "though my friendship and love to him has made me conceal it; yet you may say, I threatened the next time he attempted any thing of that kind, to discover it to my lord.

*Lady T.* To what end is this?

*Mask.* It will confirm my lord's opinion of my honour and honesty, and create in him a new confidence in me, which (should this design miscarry) will be necessary to the forming another plot that I have in my head—to cheat you as well as the rest.

[*Aside.*

*Lady T.* I'll do it—I'll tell him you hindered him once from forcing me.

*Mask.* Excellent! your ladyship has a most improving fancy. You had best go to my lord, keep him as long as you can in his closet, and I doubt not but you will mould him to what you please; your guests are so engaged in their own follies and intrigues, they'll miss neither of you.

*Lady T.* When shall we meet?—At eight this evening in my chamber; there rejoice at our success, and toy away an hour in mirth.

[*Exit.*

*Mask.* I will not fail.———I know what she means by toying away an hour well enough. Pox, I have lost all my appetite to her; yet she's a fine woman, and I loved her once. "But I don't know, since I have been in a great measure kept by her, the case is altered;" what was my pleasure is become my duty: and I have as little stomach to her now as if I were her husband. Should she smoke my design upon Cynthia, I were in a fine pickle. She has a damned penetrating head, and knows how to interpret a coldness the right way; therefore I must dissemble ardour and ecstasy, that's resolved: How easily and pleasantly is that dissembled before fruition! Pox on it,



that a man can't drink without quenching his thirst. Ha! yonder comes Mellefont thoughtful. Let me think: meet her at eight—hum—ha! by Heaven I have it—if I can speak to my lord before—"Was it my brain, or Providence? no matter "which"—I will deceive them all, and yet secure myself, 'twas a lucky thought! Well, this double-dealing is a jewel. Here he comes, now for me——

[Maskwell pretending not to see him, walks by him, and speaks as it were to himself.

*Enter MELLEFONT musing.*

*Mask.* Mercy on us, what will the wickedness of this world come to?

*Mel.* How now, Jack? What, so full of contemplation that you run over!

*Mask.* I'm glad you are come, for I could not contain myself any longer, and was just going to give vent to a secret, which nobody but you ought to drink down.—Your aunt is just gone from hence.

*Mel.* And having trusted thee with the secrets of her soul, thou art villanously bent to discover them all to me, ha?

*Mask.* I am afraid my frailty leans that way—But I don't know whether I can in honour discover them all.

*Mel.* All, all man. What, you may in honour betray her as far as she betrays herself. No tragical design upon my person, I hope.

*Mask.* No, but it is a comical design upon mine.

*Mel.* What dost thou mean!

*Mask.* Listen and be dumb—We have been bargaining about the rate of your ruin——

*Mel.* Like any two guardians to an orphan heiress—Well.

*Mask.* And whereas pleasure is generally paid with mischief, what mischief I do is to be paid with pleasure.



*Mel.* So when you've swallowed the potion, you sweeten your mouth with a plumb.

*Mask.* You are merry, Sir, but I shall probe your constitution. In short, the price of your banishment is to be paid with the person of——

*Mel.* Of Cynthia, and her fortune—Why you forget you told me this before.

*Mask.* No, no—So far you are right; and I am as an earnest of that bargain, to have full and free possession of the person of—your aunt.

*Mel.* Ha!—Pho, you trifle.

*Mask.* By this light, I am serious; all raillery apart—I knew 't would stun you:—This evening at eight she will receive me in her bed-chamber.

*Mel.* Hell and the devil, is she abandoned of all grace——  
Why the woman is possessed——

*Mask.* Well, will you go in my stead?

*Mel.* By Heaven into a hot furnace sooner.

*Mask.* No, you would not—it would not be so convenient as I can order matters.

*Mel.* What do you mean?

*Mask.* Mean? not to disappoint the lady, I assure you——  
Ha, ha, ha, how gravely he looks—come, come, I won't perplex you. 'Tis the only thing that Providence could have contrived to make me capable of serving you, either to my inclination or your own necessity.

*Mel.* How, how, for Heaven's sake, dear Maskwell?

*Mask.* Why thus—I'll go according to appointment; you shall have notice of the critical minute to come and surprize your aunt and me together; counterfeit a rage against me, and I will make my escape through the private passage from her chamber, which I'll take care to leave open: 't will be hard, if then you can't bring her to any conditions. For this dis-

covery will disarm her of all defence, and leave her entirely at your mercy: nay, she must ever after be in awe of you.

*Mel.* Let me adore thee, my better genius! by Heaven I think it is not in the power of fate to disappoint my hopes—My hopes, my certainty!

*Mask.* Well, I'll meet you here within a quarter of eight, and give you notice. [Exit.

*Mel.* Good fortune ever go along with thee.

*Enter CARELESS.*

*Care.* Mellefont get out of the way, my lady Plyant's coming, and I shall never succeed while thou art in sight—tho' she begins to tack about; but I made love a great while to no purpose.

*Mel.* Why, what's the matter? She is convinced that I don't care for her.

*Care.* I cannot get an answer from her that does not begin with her honour, or her virtue, her religion, or some such cant. Then she has told me the whole story of sir Paul's nine years courtship; how he has lain for whole nights together upon the stairs before her chamber-door; and that the first favour he received from her, was a piece of an old scarlet petticoat for a stomacher; which, since the day of his marriage, he has, out of a piece of gallantry, converted into a night-cap, and wears it still with much solemnity on his anniversary wedding night.

*Mel.* That I have seen, with the ceremony thereunto belonging—for on that night he creeps in at the bed's feet, like gulled Bassa that has married a relation of the Grand Signior, “and that night he has his arms at liberty. Did she not tell “you at what a distance she keeps him? he has confessed to “me, that but at some certain times, that is, I suppose, when “she apprehends being with child, he never has the privilege “of using the familiarity of a husband with a wife. He was

“ once given to scrambling with his hands, and sprawling in  
“ his sleep, and ever since she has swaddled him up in blan-  
“ kets, and his hands and feet swathed down, and so put to  
“ bed ;— and there he lies with a great beard, like a Russian  
“ bear upon a drift of snow. You are very great with him,” I  
wonder he never told you his grievances ; he will, I warrant  
you.

*Care.* Excessively foolish !—But that which gives me most  
hopes of her, is her telling me of the many temptations she has  
resisted.

*Mel.* Nay, then you have her ; for a woman’s bragging to a  
man that she has overcome temptations, is an argument that  
they were weakly offered, and a challenge to him to engage  
her more irresistibly. ’T is only an enhancing the price of the  
commodity, by telling you how many customers have underbid  
her.

*Care.* Nay, I do n’t despair—but still she has a grudging to  
you—I talk’d to her t’ other night at my lord Froth’s masque-  
rade, when I am satisfied she knew me, and I had no reason to  
complain of my reception ; but I find women are not the same  
bare-faced and in masks—and a vizor disguises their inclina-  
tions as much as their faces.

*Mel.* “ ’T is a mistake : for women may most properly be  
“ said to be unmask’d when they wear vizors ; for that secures  
“ them from blushing, and being out of countenance, and  
“ next to being in the dark, or alone, they are most truly  
“ themselves in a vizor mask.” Here they come, I’ll leave  
you. Fly her close, and by and by clap a *billet-doux* into her  
hand : for a woman never thinks a man truly in love with her  
’till he has been fool enough to think of her out of her sight,  
and to lose so much time as to write to her. [Exit.

*Enter Sir PAUL and Lady PLYANT.*

*Sir P.* Shan't we disturb your meditation, Mr. Careless? you would be in private?

*Care.* You bring that along with you, sir Paul, that shall be always welcome to my privacy.

*Sir P.* O, sweet sir, you load your humble servants, both me and my wife with continual favours.

*Lady P.* Sir Paul, what a phrase was there! you will be making answers, and taking that upon you which ought to lie upon me: that you should have so little breeding to think Mr. Careless did not apply himself to me. Pray, what have you to entertain any body's privacy? I swear and declare in the face of the world I'm ready to blush for your ignorance.

*Sir P.* I acquiesce, my lady; but don't snub so loud.

*[Aside to her.]*

*Lady P.* Mr. Careless, if a person that is wholly illiterate might be supposed to be capable of being qualified to make a suitable return to those obligations which you are pleased to confer upon one that is wholly incapable of being qualified in all those circumstances, I am sure I should rather attempt it than any thing in the world, *[Courtsies.]* for I'm sure there's nothing in the world that I would rather. *[Courtsies.]* But I know Mr. Careless is so great a critic and so fine a gentleman, that it is impossible for me——

*Care.* O Heavens! madam, you confound me.

*Sir P.* Gads-bud, she's a fine person——

*Lady P.* O lord! sir, pardon me; we women have not those advantages: I know my own imperfections—but at the same time you must give me leave to declare in the face of the world that nobody is more sensible of favours and things; for, with the reserve of my honour, I assure you, Mr. Careless, I don't

know any thing in the world I would refuse to a person so meritorious—You'll pardon my want of expression.

*Care.* O, your ladyship is abounding in all excellence, particularly that of phrase.

*Lady P.* You are so obliging, sir.

*Care.* Your ladyship is so charming.

*Sir P.* So, now, now; now, my lady.

*Lady P.* So well bred.

*Care.* So surprizing.

*Lady P.* So well drest, so *bonne mien*, so eloquent, so unaffected, so easy, so free, so particular, so agreeable—

*Sir P.* Ay, so, so, there.

*Care.* O lord, I beseech you, madam, don't—

*Lady P.* So gay, so graceful, so good teeth, so fine shape, so fine limbs, so fine linen, and I don't doubt but you have a very good skin, sir.

*Care.* For Heaven's sake, madam—I am quite out of countenance.

*Sir P.* And my lady's quite out of breath; or else you should hear—Gad's-bud, you may talk of my lady Froth.

*Care.* O fy, fy, not to be named of a lady—my lady Froth is very well in her accomplishments—but it is when my lady Plyant is not thought of—if that can ever be.

*Lady P.* O, you overcome me—That is so excessive.

*Sir P.* Nay, I swear and vow that was pretty.

*Care.* O, sir Paul, you are the happiest man alive. Such a lady! that is the envy of her own sex, and the admiration of ours.

*Sir P.* Your humble servant; I am, I thank Heaven, in a fine way of living, as I may say, peacefully and happily, and I think need not envy any of my neighbours, blessed be Providence—Ay, truly, Mr. Careless, my lady is a great blessing, a fine, discreet, well-spoken woman as you shall see—if it be-



comes me to say so; and we live very comfortably together; she is a little hasty sometimes, and so am I; but mine's soon over, and then I am so sorry—O, Mr. Careless, if it were not for one thing—

*Enter Boy with a letter.*

*Lady P.* How often have you been told of that, you jackanapes?

*Sir P.* Gad so, gads-bud—Tim, carry it to my lady, you should have carried it to my lady first.

*Boy.* 'Tis directed to your worship.

*Sir P.* Well, well, my lady reads all letters first—Child, do so no more, d'ye hear, Tim.

*Boy.* No, and please you. [Exit.

*Sir P.* A humour of my wife's; you know women will have little fancies—But as I was telling you, Mr. Careless, if it were not for one thing, I should think myself the happiest man in the world; indeed that touches me near, very near.

*Care.* What can that be, sir Paul?

*Sir P.* Why, I have, I thank Heaven, a very plentiful fortune, a good estate in the country, some houses in town, and some money, a pretty tolerable personal estate; and it is a great grief to me, indeed it is, Mr. Careless, that I have not a son to inherit this. 'Tis true, I have a daughter, and a fine dutiful child she is, though I say it, blessed be Providence, I may say; for indeed, Mr. Careless I am mightily beholden to Providence—a poor unworthy sinner—But if I had a son, ah! that's my affliction, and my only affliction; indeed, I cannot refrain tears when it comes into my mind. [Cries.

*Care.* Why, methinks that might be easily remedied; my lady is a fine likely woman.

*Sir P.* Oh, a fine likely woman as you shall see in a summer's day—Indeed she is, Mr. Careless, in all respects,

*Care.* And I should not have taken you to have been so old—

*Sir P.* Alas! that's not it, Mr. Careless: ah! that's not it; no, no, you shoot wide of the mark a mile; indeed you do; that's not it, Mr. Careless; no, no, that's not it.

*Care.* No, what can be the matter then?

*Sir P.* You'll scarcely believe me when I shall tell you—my lady is so nice—it is very strange, but it is true: too true—she is so very nice, that I do n't believe she would touch a man for the world.—“At least not above once a year; I am sure I have found it so; and alas, what's once a year to an old man who would do good in his generation!” Indeed, it is true, Mr. Careless, it breaks my heart—I am her husband, as I may say; though far unworthy of that honour, yet I am her husband; but alas-a-day, I have no more familiarity with her person—“as to that matter”—than with my own mother—no indeed.

*Care.* Alas-a-day! this is a lamentable story; my lady must be told on't; she must, i' faith, sir Paul; 'tis an injury to the world.

*Sir P.* Ah! would to Heaven you would, Mr. Careless; you are mightily in her favour.

*Care.* I warrant you, what, we must have a son some way or other.

*Sir P.* Indeed, I should be mightily bound to you, if you could bring it about, Mr. Careless.

*Lady P.* Here, sir Paul, it is from your steward, here's a return of 60*l.* you may take fifty of it for the next half-year.

[Gives him the letter.

*Enter Lord FROTH and CYNTHIA.*

*Sir P.* How does my girl? Come hither to thy father, poor lamb, thou art melancholic.

*Lord F.* Heaven, sir Paul, you amaze me of all things in the world—You are never pleased but when we are all upon the broad grin; all laugh and no company; ah! then 't is such a sight to see some teeth—Sure you are a great admirer of my lady Whifler, Mr. Sneer, and sir Laurence Loud, and that gang.

*Sir P.* I vow and swear she is a very merry woman, but I think she laughs a little too much.

*Lord F.* Merry! O lord, what a character that is of a woman of quality—You have been at my lady Whifler's upon her day, madam?

*Cyn.* Yes, my lord—I must humour this fool. [*Aside.*]

*Lord F.* Well and how? hee! What is your sense of the conversation?

*Cyn.* O, most ridiculous, a perpetual concert of laughing without any harmony; for sure, my lord, to laugh out of time is as disagreeable as to sing out of time or out of tune.

*Lord F.* Hee, hee, hee, right; and then my lady Whifler is so ready—she always comes in three bars too soon—And then, what do they laugh at? For you know laughing without a jest is as impertinent, hee! as——

*Cyn.* As dancing without a fiddle.

*Lord F.* Just i' faith, that was at my tongue's end.

*Cyn.* But that cannot be properly said of them, for I think they are all in good nature with the world, and only laugh at one another: and you must allow they have all jests in their persons, though they have none in their conversation.

*Lord F.* True, as I am a person of honour——For Heaven's sake let us sacrifice them to mirth a little.

[*Enter boy and whispers* Sir Paul.

*Sir P.* Gad so—Wife, wife, my lady Plyant, I have a word.

*Lady P.* I am busy, sir Paul, I wonder at your impertinence——

*Care.* Sir Paul, harkee, I am reasoning the matter you know : madam, if your ladyship please we'll discourse of this in the next room. [Exit Lady Plyant and Care.]

*Sir P.* O ho, I wish you good success, I wish you good success. Boy, tell my lady, when she has done, I would speak with her below. [Exit Sir Paul.]

*Enter Lady FROTH and BRISK.*

*Lady F.* Then you think that episode between Susan the dairy-maid, and our coachman, is not amiss ; you know I may suppose the dairy in town, as well as in the country.

*Brisk.* Incomparable, let me perish—But then being an heroic poem, had you not better call him a charioteer ? Charioteer sounds great : besides your ladyship's coachman having a red face, and you comparing him to the sun—And you know the sun is called Heaven's charioteer.

*Lady F.* Oh, infinitely better ; I am extremely beholden to you for the hint ; stay, we'll read over those half a score lines again. [Pulls out a paper.] Let me see here, you know what goes before—the comparison, you know. [Reads.]

*For as the sun shines every day,*

*So of our coachman I may say,*

*Brisk.* I am afraid that simile won't do in wet weather—Because you say the sun shines every day.

*Lady F.* No, for the sun it won't, but it will do for the coachman, for you know there's most occasion for a coach in wet weather.

*Brisk.* Right, right, that saves all.

*Lady F.* Then I do n't say the sun shines all the day, but that he peeps now and then, yet he does shine all the day too, you know, though we don't see him.

*Brisk.* Right, but the vulgar will never comprehend that.

*Lady F.* Well, you shall hear—Let me see.

[Reads.] *For as the sun shines every day,  
So of our coachman I may say,  
He shows his drunken fiery face,  
Just as the sun does, more or less.*

*Brisk.* That's right, all's well, all's well. More or less.

*Lady F.* [Reads.]

*And when at night his labour's done,  
Then too, like Heaven's charioteer, the sun :*

Ay, charioteer does better.

*Into the dairy he descends,  
And there his whipping and his driving ends ;  
There he's secure from danger of a bilk,  
His fare is paid him, and he sets in milk.*

For Susan, you know, is Thetis, and so——

*Brisk.* Incomparable well and proper, 'egad—But I have one exception to make—Do n't you think bilk (I know it is good rhyme) but do n't you think bilk and fare too like a hackney coachman ?

*Lady F.* I swear and vow I am afraid so.——And yet our Jehu was a hackney coachman when my lord took him.

*Brisk.* Was he ? I am answered, if Jehu was a hackney coachman—You may put that in the marginal notes though to prevent criticism—Only mark it with a small asterism, and say—Jehu was formerly a hackney coachman.

*Lady F.* I will ; you'll oblige me extremely to write notes to the whole poem.

*Brisk.* With all my heart and soul, and proud of the vast honour, let me perish.

*Lord F.* Hee, hee, hee, my dear, have you done ?——Won't you join with us ? we were laughing at my lady Whifler and Mr. Sneer.

*Lady F.* ——Ay, my dear——Were you ? Oh, filthy Mr. Sneer ; he's a nauseous figure, a most fulsamic fop, foh——



He spent two days together in going about Covent-Garden to suit the lining of his coach with his complexion.

*Lord F.* O silly! yet his aunt is as fond of him as if she had brought the ape into the world herself.

*Brisk.* Who, my lady Toothless; O, she's a mortifying spectacle; she's always chewing the cud like an old ewe.

*Cyn.* Fy, Mr. Brisk, eringo is for her cough.

*Lady F.* I have seen her take them half-chewed out of her mouth to laugh, and then put them in again—Foh.

*Lord F.* Foh.

*Lady F.* Then she is always ready to laugh when Sneer offers to speak—and sits in expectation of his no jest, with her gums bare, and her mouth open——

*Brisk.* Like an oyster at low ebb, 'egad—Ha, ha, ha.

“*Cyn.* [*Aside.*] Well, I find there are no fools so considerable in themselves, but they can render other people contemptible by exposing their infirmities.”

*Lady F.* Then that t'other great strapping lady—I cannot hit of her name; the old fat fool that paints so exorbitantly.

*Brisk.* I know whom you mean—But deuce take me, I cannot hit of her name neither—Paints, d'ye say? Why, she lays it on with a trowel—Then she has a great beard that bristles through it, and makes her look as if she were plaistered with lime and hair, let me perish.

*Lady F.* Oh, you made a song upon her, Mr. Brisk.

*Brisk.* He! 'egad, so I did—My lord can sing it.

“*Cyn.* O good, my lord, let us hear it.”

*Brisk.* 'Tis not a song neither—It is a sort of an epigram, or rather an epigrammatic sonnet; I do n't know what to call it, but it is satire.—“Sing it, my lord.”

*Lord Froth sings.*

*Ancient Phillis has young graces,  
'Tis a strange thing, but a true one;  
Shall I tell you how?  
She herself makes her own faces,  
And each morning wears a new one!  
Where's the wonder now?*

*Brisk.* Short, but there is salt in it; my way of writing, 'egad.

*Enter Footman,*

*Lady F.* How now?

*Foot.* Your ladyship's chair is come.

*Lady F.* Is nurse and the child in it?

*Foot.* Yes, madam.

[*Exit.*

*Lady F.* O, the dear creature! let us go see it.

*Lord F.* I swear, my dear, you'll spoil that child with sending it to and again so often; this is the seventh time the chair has gone for her to-day.

*Lady F.* O la, I swear it's but the sixth—and I ha n't seen her these two hours—The poor dear creature—I swear, my lord, you do n't love poor little Sappho,—Come, my dear Cynthia, Mr. Brisk, we'll go see Sappho, though my lord won't.

*Cyn.* I'll wait upon your ladyship.

*Brisk.* Pray, madam, how old is lady Sappho?

*Lady F.* Three quarters; but I swear she has a world of wit, and can sing a tune already. My lord, won't you go? Won't you? What, not to see Saph? Pray, my lord, come see little Saph. I knew you could not stay.

[*Exeunt all but Cynthia.*

“ *Cyn.* ’T is not so hard to counterfeit joy in the depth of affliction, as to dissemble mirth in the company of fools—  
 “ Why should I call them fools? The world thinks better of them; for these have quality and education, wit and fine conversation, are received and admired by the world—If not, they like and admire themselves—And why is not that true wisdom, for it is happiness? And for ought I know, we have misapplied the name all this while, and mistaken the thing: since

“ *If happiness in self-content is plac’d,*

“ *The wise are wretched, and fools only bless’d.* [Exit.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

“ *Enter MELLEFONT and CYNTHIA.*

“ *Cynthia.*

“ I HEARD him loud as I came by the closet-door, and my lady with him; but she seemed to moderate his passion.

“ *Mel.* Ay, hell thank her, as gentle breezes moderate a fire; but I shall counter-work her spells, and ride the witch in her own bridle.

“ *Cyn.* It is impossible; she’ll cast beyond you still—I’ll lay my life it will never be a match,

“ *Mel.* What?

“ *Cyn.* Between you and me.

“ *Mel.* Why so?

“ *Cyn.* My mind gives me it won’t—because we are both willing; we each of us strive to reach the goal, and hinder one another in the race; I swear it never does well when parties are so agreed—For when people walk hand in hand,

“ there’s neither overtaking nor meeting : we hunt in couples  
“ where we both pursue the same game, but forget one another;  
“ and ’tis because we are so near that we don’t think of coming together.

“ *Mel.* Hum, ’egad I believe there’s something in it—Marriage is the game that we hunt, and while we think that  
“ we only have it in view, I don’t see but we have it in our power.

“ *Cyn.* Within reach; for example, give me your hand;  
“ you have looked through the wrong end of the perspective  
“ all this while; for nothing has been between us but our fears.

“ *Mel.* I don’t know why we should not steal out of the  
“ house this very moment, and marry one another, without consideration, or the fear of repentance. Pox o’ fortune, portion,  
“ settlements, and jointures.

“ *Cyn.* Ay, ay, what have we to do with them; you know  
“ we marry for love.

“ *Mel.* Love, love, downright very villanous love.

“ *Cyn.* And he that cannot live upon love deserves to die in  
“ a ditch.—Here then, I give you my promise, in spite of  
“ duty, any temptation of wealth, your inconstancy, or my own  
“ inclination to change——

“ *Mel.* To run most wilfully and unreasonably away with me  
“ this moment, and be married.

“ *Cyn.* Hold—Never to marry any body else.

“ *Mel.* That’s but a kind of negative consent—Why, you  
“ won’t baulk the frolic?

“ *Cyn.* If you had not been so assured of your own conduct  
“ I would not——But ’tis but reasonable that since I consent to like a man without the vile consideration of money,  
“ he should give me a very evident demonstration of his wit;  
“ therefore, let me see you undermine my lady Touchwood,

" as you boasted, and force her to give her consent, and  
" then——

" *Mel.* I'll do it.

" *Cyn.* And I'll do it.

" *Mel.* This very next ensuing hour of eight o'clock, is the  
" last minute of her reign, unless the devil assist her in *propria*  
" *persona*.

" *Cyn.* Well, if the devil should assist her, and your plot  
" miscarry.——

" *Mel.* Ay, what am I to trust to then?

" *Cyn.* Why, if you give me very clear demonstration that it  
" was the devil, I will allow for irresistible odds. But if I find  
" it to be only chance, or destiny, or unlucky stars, or any  
" thing but the very devil, I am inexorable: only still I'll  
" keep my word, and live a maid for your sake.

" *Mel.* And you won't die one for your own, so still there's  
" hope.

" *Cyn.* Here is my mother-in-law, and your friend Careless,  
" I would not have them see us together yet. [Exeunt.]

*Enter CARELESS and Lady PLYANT. \**

*Lady P.* I swear, Mr. Careless, you are very alluring—and  
say so many fine things, and nothing is so moving to me as a  
fine thing. Well, I must do you this justice, and declare in  
the face of the world, never any body gained so far upon me as  
yourself; with blushes I must own it, you have shaken, as I  
may say, the very foundation of my honour—Well, sure if I  
escape your importunities, I shall value myself as long as I live,  
I swear.

*Care.* And despise me.

[Sighing.]

*Lady P.* The last of any man in the world, by my purity

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\* The fourth act, in representation, begins here.



now you make me swear—O, gratitude forbid that I should ever be wanting in a respectful acknowledgment of an entire resignation of all my best wishes for the person and parts of so accomplished a person, whose merit challenges much more, I am sure, than my illiterate praises can describe.——

*Care.* [*In a whining tone.*] Ah, Heavens, madam, you ruin me with kindness; your charming tongue pursues the victory of your eyes, while at your feet your poor adorer dies.

*Lady P.* Ah! very fine.

*Care.* [*Still whining.*] Ah, why are you so fair, so bewitching fair? O, let me grow to the ground here, and feast upon that hand; O, let me press it to my heart, my trembling heart, the nimble movement shall instruct your pulse, and teach it to alarm desire.—Zoons I am almost at the end of my cant, if she does not yield quickly. [*Aside.*]

*Lady P.* O, that's so passionate and fine, I cannot hear it—I am not safe if I stay, and must leave you.

*Care.* And must you leave me! Rather let me languish out a wretched life, and breathe my soul beneath your feet.—— I must say the same thing over again, and cannot help it.

[*Aside.*]

*Lady P.* I swear I am ready to languish too——O my honour! Whither is it going? I protest you have given me the palpitation of the heart.

*Care.* Can you be so cruel?

*Lady P.* O rise, I beseech you, say no more 'till you rise—Why did you kneel so long? I swear I was so transported I did not see it——Well, to shew you how far you have gained upon me, I assure you, if sir Paul should die, of all mankind there's none I'd sooner make my second choice.

*Care.* O Heaven! I cannot out-live this night without your favour—I feel my spirits faint, a general dampness over-spreads my face, a cold deadly dew already vents through all my pores

and will to-morrow wash me for ever from your sight, and drown me in my tomb.

*Lady P.* O, you have conquered, sweet, melting, moving sir, you have conquered—What heart of marble can refrain to weep, and yield to such sad sayings.— [Cries.

*Care.* I thank Heaven, they are the saddest that I ever said— Oh! “I shall never contain laughter.” [Aside.

*Lady P.* Oh, I yield myself up all to your uncontrollable embraces—Say, thou dear dying man, when, where, and how? —“Ah, there’s sir Paul.”

*Care.* ‘Slife, yonder’s sir Paul, but if he were not come, I am so transported I cannot speak——This note will inform you.

[Gives her a note. Exit.

*Enter Sir PAUL and CYNTHIA.*

*Sir P.* Thou art my tender lambkin, and shalt do what thou wilt—but endeavour to forget this Mellefont.

*Cyn.* I would obey you to my power, sir; but if I have not him, I have sworn never to marry.

*Sir P.* Never to marry! Heavens forbid! Must I neither have sons nor grandsons? Must the family of the Plyants be utterly extinct for want of issue male. Oh, impiety! But did you swear, did that sweet creature swear! ha? How durst you swear without my consent, ah? Gads-bud, who am I?

*Cyn.* Pray do n’t be angry, sir; when I swore I had your consent, and therefore I swore.

*Sir P.* Why then the revoking my consent does annul, or make of none effect your oath; so you may unswear it again —The law will allow it.

*Cyn.* Ay, but my conscience never will.

*Sir P.* Gads-bud, no matter for that; conscience and law never go together; you must not expect that.

*Lady P.* Ay, but sir Paul, I conceive if she has sworn, d’ye

mark me, if she has once sworn, it is most unchristian, inhuman, and obscene that she should break it.—I'll make up the match again, because Mr. Careless said it would oblige him.

[*Aside.*]

*Sir P.* Does your ladyship conceive so?—Why, I was of that opinion once too—Nay, if your ladyship conceives so, I am of that opinion again; but I can neither find my lord nor my lady, to know what they intend.

*Lady P.* I am satisfied that my cousin Mellefont has been much wronged.

*Cyn.* [*Aside.*] I am amazed to find her of our side, for I am sure she loved him.

*Lady P.* I know my lady Touchwood has no kindness for him; and besides, I have been informed by Mr. Careless, that Mellefont had never any thing more than a profound respect—That he has owned himself to be my admirer, 't is true, but he was never so presumptuous to entertain any dishonourable notions of things; so that if this be made plain—I do 'nt see how my daughter can in conscience, or honour, or any thing in the world—

*Sir P.* Indeed if this be made plain, as my lady your mother says, child——

*Lady P.* Plain! I was informed of it by Mr. Careless—And I assure you Mr. Careless is a person—that has a most extraordinary respect and honour for you, sir Paul.

*Cyn.* [*Aside.*] And for your ladyship too, I believe, or else you had not changed sides so soon; now I begin to find it.

*Sir P.* I am much obliged to Mr. Careless, really he is a person that I have a great value for, not only for that, but because he has a great veneration for your ladyship.

*Lady P.* O la, no indeed, sir Paul, it is upon your account.

*Sir P.* No, I protest and vow I have no title to his esteem, but in having the honour to appertain in some measure to your ladyship, that's all.

*Lady P.* O la, now, I swear and declare, it shan't be so, you are too modest, sir Paul.

*Sir P.* It becomes me, when there is any comparison made between——

*Lady P.* O fy, fy, 'sir Paul, you'll put me out of countenance—Your very obedient and affectionate wife, that's all—And highly honoured in that title.

*Sir P.* Gads-bud I am transported! Give me leave to kiss your ladyship's hand.

"*Cyn.* That my poor father should be so very silly. [*Aside.*"]

*Lady P.* My lip, indeed, sir Paul, I swear you shall.

[*He kisses her, and bows very low.*]

*Sir P.* I humbly thank your ladyship—I don't know whether I fly on ground, or walk in air—Gads-bud, she was never thus before—Well, I must own myself beholden to Mr. Careless—As sure as can be this is all his doing—something that he has said; well 'tis a rare thing to have an ingenuous friend. Well, your ladyship is of opinion that the match may go forward.

*Lady P.* By all means—Mr. Careless has satisfied me of the matter.

*Sir P.* Well, why then, lamb, you may keep your oath, but have a care of making rash vows; come hither to me, and kiss papa.

*Lady P.* I swear and declare, I am in such a twitter to read Mr. Careless's letter, that I cannot forbear any longer—But though I may read all letters first by prerogative, yet I'll be sure to be unsuspected this time.—Sir Paul.

*Sir P.* Did your ladyship call?

*Lady P.* Nay, not to interrupt you, my dear—Only lend me your letter, which you had from your steward to-day: I would look upon the account again; and may be increase the allowance,

*Sir P.* There it is, madam. Do you want a pen and ink?

[*Bows and gives the letter.*]

*Lady P.* No, no, nothing else I thank you, sir Paul—So now I can read my own letter under the cover of his. [*Aside.*]

*Sir P.* He? and wilt thou bring a grandson at nine months end—He? a brave chopping boy.—I'll settle a thousand pounds a year upon the rogue as soon as ever he looks me in the face, I will gads-bud. I am overjoyed to think I have any of my family that will bring children into the world. For I would fain have some resemblance of myself in my posterity, he, Thy! "Cannot you contrive that affair, girl? do; Gads-bud think on thy old father;" heh! Make the young rogue as like as you can.

*Cyn.* I am glad to see you so merry, sir.

*Sir P.* Merry! Gads-bud I am serious! I'll give thee 500*l.* for every inch of him that resembles me; ah, this eye, this left eye! A thousand pounds for this left eye. This has done execution in its time, girl; why, thou hast my leer, hussy, just thy father's leer.—Let it be transmitted to the young rogue by the help of imagination—Why 't is the mark of our family, Thy; our house is distinguished by a languishing eye, as the house of Austria is by a thick lip—Ah! when I was of your age, hussy, I would have held fifty to one I could have drawn my own picture—Gads-bud, but I could have done—not so much as you neither,—but—nay, do n't blush——

*Cyn.* I do n't blush, sir, for I vow I do n't understand.

*Sir P.* Pshaw, pshaw, you fib, you baggage, you do understand, and you shall understand: come do n't be so nice; Gads-bud don't learn after your mother-in-law, my lady here—Marry, Heaven forbid that you should follow her example, that would spoil all indeed. Bless us, if you should take a vagary, and make a rash resolution on your wedding-night to die a maid, as she did, all were ruined, all my hopes lost—My



heart would break, and my estate would be left to the wide world, he! I hope you are a better christian than to think of living a nun, he? Answer me.

*Cyn.* I am all obedience, sir, to your commands.

*Lady P.* [*Having read the letter.*] O, dear Mr. Careless, I swear he writes charmingly, and he looks charmingly, and he has charmed me as much as I have charmed him; and so I'll tell him in the wardrobe when 't is dark. O crimine! I hope sir Paul has not seen both letters—[*Puts the wrong letter hastily up, and gives him her own.*] Sir Paul, here's your letter, to-morrow morning I'll settle accounts to your advantage.

*Enter BRISK.*

*Brisk.* Sir Paul, gads-bud, you are an uncivil person, let me tell you, and all that; and I did not think it had been in you.

*Sir P.* O la, what's the matter now? I hope you are not angry, Mr. Brisk?

*Brisk.* Deuce take me, I believe you intend to marry your daughter yourself; you are always brooding over her like an old hen, as if she were not well hatched, 'egad, he?

*Sir P.* Good strange! Mr. Brisk is such a merry facetious person, he, he, he. No, no, I have done with her, I have done with her now.

*Brisk.* The fiddles have stayed this hour in the hall, and my lord Froth wants a partner; we can never begin without her.

*Sir P.* Go, go, child, go, get you gone and dance, and be merry; I will come and look at you by and by.—Where is my son Mellefont?

*Lady P.* I'll send him to them, I know where he is—

*Brisk.* Sir Paul, will you send Careless into the hall if you meet him.

*Sir P.* I will, I will, I'll go and look for him on purpose.

[*Exeunt all but Brisk.*]

*Brisk.* So now they are all gone, and I have an opportunity to practise—Ah! my dear lady Froth! She's a most engaging creature, if she were not so fond of that damned coxcomby lord of hers; and yet I am forced to allow him wit too, to keep in with him—No matter, she's a woman of parts, and, 'egad, parts will carry her. She said, she would follow me into the gallery—Now to make my approaches—Hem, hem! Ah, madam!—[*Bows.*—]—Pox on't, why should I disparage my parts by thinking what to say; None but dull rogues think: witty men, like rich fellows, are always ready for all expences, while your blockheads, like poor needy scoundrels, are forced to examine their stock, and forecast the charges of the day. Here she comes; I'll seem not to see her, and try to win her with a new airy invention of my own, hem!

*Enter Lady FROTH.*

[*Brisk sings walking about.*] I'm sick with love, ha, ha, ha, pr'ythee come cure me.

I'm sick with, &c.

O, ye powers! O, my lady Froth, my lady Froth, my lady Froth! Heigho! Break, heart; Gods, I thank you.

[*Stands musing with his arms across.*

*Lady F.* O, Heavens, Mr. Brisk! What's the matter?

*Brisk.* My lady Froth! Your ladyship's most humble servant—The matter, madam? Nothing, madam, nothing at all 'egad. I was fallen into the most agreeable amusement in the whole province of contemplation: That is all—(I'll seem to conceal my passion, and that will look like respect.) [*Aside.*

*Lady F.* Bless me, why did you call out upon me so loud?—

*Brisk.* O, lord, I, madam! I beseech your ladyship—  
When?

*Lady F.* Just now as I came in; bless me, why don't you know it?

*Brisk.* Not I, let me perish—But did I? Strange! I confess your ladyship was in my thoughts; and I was in a sort of dream that did in a manner represent a very pleasing object to my imagination, but—but did I indeed?—To see how love and murder will out. But did I really name my lady Froth?

*Lady F.* Three times aloud, as I love letters—But did you talk of love? O, Parnassus! Who would have thought Mr. Brisk could have been in love, ha, ha, ha. O, Heavens! I thought you could have no mistress but the nine muses.

*Brisk.* No more I have, 'egad, for I adore them all in your ladyship—Let me perish, I don't know whether to be splenetic or airy upon it; the deuce take me if I can tell whether I am glad or sorry that your ladyship has made the discovery.

*Lady F.* O, be merry by all means—Prince Volscius in love! Ha, ha, ha.

*Brisk.* O, barbarous, to turn me into ridicule! Yet, ha, ha, ha. The deuce take me, I cannot help laughing, myself, ha, ha, ha; yet by Heavens I have a violent passion for your ladyship, seriously.

*Lady F.* Seriously! Ha, ha, ha.

*Brisk.* Seriously, ha, ha, ha. Gad I have, for all I laugh.

*Lady F.* Ha, ha, ha! What d'ye think I laugh at? ha, ha, ha.

*Brisk.* Me, 'egad, ha ha.

*Lady F.* No, the deuce take me if I don't laugh at myself; for, hang me if I have not a violent passion for Mr. Brisk, ha, ha, ha.

*Brisk.* Seriously?

*Lady F.* Seriously, ha, ha, ha.

*Brisk.* That's well enough, let me perish, ha, ha, ha. O miraculous, what a happy discovery! Ay, my dear charming lady Froth!

*Lady F.* Oh, my adored Mr. Brisk!

[Embrace.]

*Enter Lord FROTH.*

*Lord F.* The company are all ready—How now!

*Brisk.* Zoons, madam, there's my lord. [*Softly to her.*

*Lady F.* Take no notice—but observe me—Now cast off, and meet me at the lower end of the room, and then join hands again; I could teach my lord this dance purely, but I vow, Mr. Brisk, I can't tell how to come so near any other man. Oh, here's my lord, now you shall see me do it with him.

[*They pretend to practise part of a country dance.*

*Lord F.* —Oh, I see there's no harm yet—But I don't like this familiarity. [*Aside.*

*Lady F.* —Shall you and I do our close dance, to shew Mr. Brisk?

*Lord F.* No, my dear, do it with him.

*Lady F.* I'll do it with him, my lord, when you are out of the way.

*Brisk.* That's good, 'egad, that's good; deuce take me, I can hardly hold laughing in his face. [*Aside.*

*Lord F.* Any other time, my dear; or we'll dance it below.

*Lady F.* With all my heart.

*Brisk.* Come, my lord, I'll wait on you—My charming witty angel!

*Lady F.* We shall have whispering time enough, you know, since we are partners. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter Lady PLYANT and CARELESS.*

*Lady P.* O, Mr. Careless, Mr. Careless, I'm ruined, I'm undone.

*Care.* What's the matter, madam?

*Lady P.* O, the unluckiest accident, I'm afraid I sha n't live to tell it you.

*Care.* Heaven forbid! What is it?

*Lady P.* I'm in such a fright; the strangest quandary and premunire! I'm all over in an universal agitation, I dare swear every circumstance of me trembles.—O your letter, your letter! by an unfortunate mistake, I have given sir Paul your letter instead of his own.

*Care.* That was unlucky.

*Lady P.* O yonder he comes reading of it, for Heaven's sake step in here and advise me quickly, before he sees.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter Sir PAUL with the letter.*

*Sir P.* —O, Providence, what a conspiracy have I discovered—But let me see to make an end on't—[*Reads.*] Hum——  
‘After supper in the wardrobe by the gallery. If Sir Paul should surprize us, I have a commission from him to treat with you about the very matter of fact!’—Very pretty: it seems, then, I am conducing to my own cuckoldom; why this is a very traiterous position of taking up arms by my authority against my person! Well, let me see—‘Till then I languish in expectation of my adored charmer.

Dying Ned Careless.’

Gads-bud, would that were matter of fact too. Die and be damned for a Judas Maccabeus and Iscariot both. O, friendship, what art thou but a name! Henceforward let no man make a friend that would not be a cuckold: for whomsoever he receives into his bosom, will find the way to his bed, and there return his caresses with interest to his wife. “Have I for this  
“been pinioned night after night for three years past? Have I  
“been swathed in blankets ’till I have been even deprived of  
“motion?” Have I approached the marriage-bed with reverence, as to a sacred shrine, “and denied myself the enjoyment  
“of lawful domestic pleasures to preserve its purity,” and



must I now find it polluted by foreign iniquity? O, my lady Plyant, you were chaste as ice, but you are melted now, and false as water.—But Providence has been constant to me in discovering this conspiracy; still I am beholden to Providence; if it were not for Providence, sure, poor sir Paul thy heart would break.

*Enter Lady PLYANT.*

*Lady P.* So, sir, I see you have read the letter—Well, now, sir Paul, what do you think of your friend Careless? Has he been treacherous, or did you give his insolence a licence to make trial of your wife's suspected virtue? D'ye see here? [*Snatches the letter as in anger.*] Look, read it! Gad's my life, if I thought it were so, I would this moment renounce all communication with you. Ungrateful monster! He? Is it so? Ay, I see it, a plot upon my honour; your guilty cheeks confess it; Oh, where shall wronged virtue fly for reparation! I'll be divorced this instant.

*Sir P.* Gads-bud, what shall I say? This is the strangest surprize! Why I don't know any thing at all, nor I don't know whether there be any thing at all in the world, or no.

*Lady P.* I thought I should try you, false man. I that never dissembled in my life; yet to make trial of you, pretended to like that monster of iniquity, Careless, and found out that contrivance to let you see this letter; which now I find was of your own inditing—I do, heathen, I do; see my face no more; “I'll be divorced presently.”

*Sir P.* O strange, what will become of me!—I am so amazed, and so overjoyed, so afraid, and so sorry.—But did you give me this letter on purpose, he? Did you?

*Lady P.* Did I? Do you doubt me, Turk, Saracen? I have a cousin that's a proctor in the commons, I'll go to him instantly——

*Sir P.* Hold, stay, I beseech your ladyship—I am so overjoyed, stay, I'll confess all.

*Lady P.* What will you confess, Jew?

*Sir P.* Why now as I hope to be saved, I had no hand in this letter—Nay, hear me, I beseech your ladyship: The devil take me now if he did not go beyond my commission—If I desired him to do any more than speak a good word only just for me; Gads-bud, only for poor sir Paul, I am an Anabaptist, or a Jew, or what you please to call me.

*Lady P.* Why, is not here matter of fact?

*Sir P.* Ay, but by your own virtue and continency that matter of fact is all his own doing.—I confess I had a great desire to have some honours conferred upon me, which lie all in your ladyship's breast, and he being a well-spoken man, I desired him to intercede for me.—

*Lady P.* Did you so? Presumption! “Oh! he comes, the  
“tarquin comes; I cannot bear his sight.” [Exit.

*Enter CARELESS.*

*Care.* Sir Paul, I am glad I have met with you; 'egad I have said all I could, but cannot prevail—Then my friendship to you has carried me a little further in this matter——

*Sir P.* Indeed—Well, sir—I'll dissemble with him a little. [Aside.

*Care.* Why, faith, I have in my time known honest gentlemen abused by a pretended coyness in their wives, and I had a mind to try my lady's virtue—And when I could not prevail for you, 'egad I pretended to be in love myself—but all in vain, she would not hear a word upon that subject; then I writ a letter to her; I do n't know what effects that will have, but I'll be sure to tell you when I do; though, by this light, I believe her virtue is impregnable.

*Sir P.* O, Providence! Providence! What discoveries are

here made! Why, this is better and more miraculous than the rest.

*Care.* What do you mean?

*Sir P.* I cannot tell you, I am so overjoyed; come along with me to my lady, I cannot contain myself; come, my dear friend.

*Care.* So, so, so, this difficulty's over. [*Aside. Exit.*]

*Enter MELLEFONT and MASKWELL from different doors.*

*Mel.* Maskwell, I have been looking for you—It is within a quarter of eight.

*Mask.* My lady is just gone into my lord's closet, you had best steal into her chamber before she comes, and lie concealed there, otherwise she may lock the door when we are together, and you not easily get in to surprize us.

*Mel.* He? You say true.

*Mask.* You had best make haste, for after she has made some apology to the company for her own and my lord's absence all this while, she'll retire to her chamber instantly.

*Mel.* I go this moment: Now, Fortune, I defy thee. [*Exit.*]

*Mask.* I confess you may be allowed to be secure in your own opinion; the appearance is very fair, but I have an after-game to play that shall turn the tables, and here comes the man that I must manage.

*Enter Lord TOUCHWOOD.*

*Lord T.* Maskwell, you are the man I wished to meet.

*Mask.* I am happy to be in the way of your lordship's commands.

*Lord T.* I have always found you prudent and careful in any thing that has concerned me or my family.

*Mask.* I were a villain else—I am bound by duty and gratitude, and my own inclination, to be ever your lordship's servant.

*Lord T.* Enough——You are my friend; I know it: Yet there has been a thing in your knowledge which has concerned me nearly, that you have concealed from me.

*Mask.* My lord!

*Lord T.* Nay, I excuse your friendship to my unnatural nephew thus far——But I know you have been privy to his impious designs upon my wife. This evening she has told me all: her good-nature concealed it as long as was possible; but he perseveres so in villany, that she has told me even you were weary of dissuading him, though you have once actually hindered him from forcing her.

*Mask.* I am sorry, my lord, I cannot make you an answer; this is an occasion in which I would not willingly be silent.

*Lord T.* I know you would excuse him——And I know as well that you cannot.

*Mask.* Indeed I was in hopes it had been but a youthful heat that might have soon boiled over; but——

*Lord T.* Say on.

*Mask.* I have nothing more to say, my lord——but to express my concern; for I think his frenzy increases daily.

*Lord T.* How! give me but proof of it, ocular proof, that I may justify my dealing with him to the world, and share my fortunes.

*Mask.* O, my lord! consider that is hard: besides, time may work upon him: then, for me to do it! I have professed an everlasting friendship to him.

*Lord T.* He is your friend, and what am I?

*Mask.* I am answered.

*Lord T.* Fear not his displeasure; I will put you out of his and Fortune's power; and, for that thou art scrupulously honest, I will secure thy fidelity to him, and give my honour never to own any discovery that you shall make me. Can you give me a demonstrative proof? Speak.

*Mask.* I wish I could not——To be plain, my lord, I intended this evening to have tried all arguments to dissuade him from a design, which I suspect; and if I had not succeeded, to have informed your lordship of what I knew.

*Lord T.* I thank you. What is the villain's purpose?

*Mask.* He has owned nothing to me of late, and what I mean now is only a bare suspicion of my own. If your lordship will meet me a quarter of an hour hence, there, in that lobby, by my lady's bed-chamber, I shall be able to tell you more.

*Lord T.* I will.

*Mask.* My duty to your lordship makes me do a severe piece of justice.

*Lord T.* I will be secret, and reward your honesty beyond your hopes. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE opening, *shews Lady TOUCHWOOD's chamber.*

MELLEFONT *solus.*

*Mel.* Pray, Heaven, my aunt keep touch with her assignation.—O, that her lord were but sweating behind this hanging, with the expectation of what I shall see—Hist, she comes—Little does she think what a mine is just ready to spring under her feet. But to my post. [*Goes behind the hangings.*]

*Enter Lady TOUCHWOOD.*

*Lady T.* 'Tis eight o' clock: methinks I should have found him here—Who does not prevent the hour of love, outstays the time; for to be duly punctual is too slow.—I was accusing you of neglect.

*Enter MASKWELL.* [*Mellefont absconding.*]

*Mask.* I confess you do reproach me when I see you here be-



fore me; but 't is fit I should be still behind-hand, still to be more and more indebted to your goodness.

*Lady T.* You can excuse a fault too well, not to have been to blame——A ready answer shews you were prepared.

*Mask.* Guilt is ever at a loss, and confusion waits upon it; when innocence and bold truth are always ready for expression——

*Lady T.* Not in love; words are the weak support of cold indifference; love has no language to be heard.

*Mask.* Excess of joy has made me stupid! Thus may my lips be ever closed. [*Kisses her.*] And thus—Oh, who would not lose his speech upon condition to have joys above it!

*Lady T.* Hold, let me lock the door first. [*Goes to the door.*]

*Mask.* [*Aside.*] That I believed; 't was well I left the private passage open.

*Lady T.* So, that's safe.

*Mask.* And so may all your pleasures be, and secret as this kiss——

*Mel.* And may all treachery be thus discovered. [*Leaps out.*]

*Lady T.* Ah!

[*Shrieks.*]

*Mel.* Villain!

[*Offers to draw.*]

*Mask.* Nay then, there's but one way.

[*Runs out.*]

*Mel.* Say you so, were you provided for an escape? Hold, madam, you have no more holes to your burrow, I stand between you and this sally-port.

*Lady T.* Thunder strike thee dead for this deceit, immediate lightning blast thee, me, and the whole world——O! I could rack myself, play the vulture to my own heart, and gnaw it piecemeal, for not boding to me this misfortune.

*Mel.* Be patient——

“*Lady T.* Be damned.”

*Mel.* Consider I have you on the hook; you will but flounder yourself a weary, and be nevertheless my prisoner.

*Lady T.* I'll hold my breath and die, but I'll be free.

*Mel.* O, madam, have a care of dying unprepared; I doubt that you have some unrepented sins that may hang heavy, and retard your flight.

*Lady T.* Oh! what shall I do? say? Whither shall I turn? Has hell no remedy?

*Mel.* None. Hell has served you even as Heaven has done, left you to yourself.—You are in a kind of Erasmus Paradise; yet if you please, you may make it a purgatory; and with a little penance and my absolution, all this may turn to a good account.

*Lady T.* [*Aside.*] Hold in my passion, and fall, fall a little, thou swelling heart; let me have some intermission of this rage, and one minute's coolness to dissemble. [*She weeps.*]

*Mel.* You have been to blame—I like those tears, and hope they are of the purest kind.—Penitential tears.

*Lady T.* O, the scene was shifted quick before me—I had not time to think—I was surprized to see a monster in the glass, and now I find 'tis myself: Can you have mercy to forgive the faults I have imagined, but never put in practice—O consider, consider how fatal you have been to me, “you have already killed the quiet of this life.” The love of you was the first wandering fire that e'er misled my steps, and while I had only that in view, I was betrayed into unthought-of ways of ruin.

*Mel.* May I believe this true?

*Lady T.* O be not cruelly incredulous—How can you doubt these streaming eyes? Keep the severest eye over all my future conduct, and if I once relapse, let me not hope forgiveness, 't will ever be in your power to ruin me—My lord shall sign to your desires; I will myself create your happiness, and Cynthia shall be this night your bride—Do but conceal my failings, and forgive.

*Mel.* Upon such terms, I will be ever yours in every honest way. [*Maskwell softly introduces Lord Touchwood, and retires.*]

*Mask.* I have kept my word, he is here, but I must not be seen.

*Lord T.* Hell and amazement! She is in tears.

*Lady T.* [*Kneeling.*] Eternal blessings thank you—Ha! my lord listening! O, Fortune has o'erpaid me all, all! all's my own!

[*Aside.*]

*Mel.* Nay, I beseech you rise.

*Lady T.* [*Aloud.*] Never, never! I'll grow to the ground, be buried quick beneath it, ere I'll be consenting to so damned a sin as incest! unnatural incest!

*Mel.* Ha!

*Lady T.* O, cruel man, will you not let me go—I'll forgive all that's past—O, Heaven, you will not ravish me!

*Mel.* Damnation!

*Lord T.* Monster! Dog! your life shall answer this—

[*Draws and runs at Mellefont, it held by Lady Touchwood.*]

*Lady T.* O, Heavens, my lord! Hold, hold, for Heaven's sake.

*Mel.* Confusion, my uncle! O, the damned sorceress.

*Lady T.* Moderate your rage, good my lord! He's mad, alas, he's mad—Indeed he is, my lord, and knows not what he does—See how wild he looks.

*Mel.* By Heaven, 'twere senseless not to be mad, and see such witchcraft.

*Lady T.* My lord, you hear him, he talks idly.

*Lord T.* Hence from my sight, thou living infamy to my name: when next I see that face, I'll write villain in it with my sword's point.

*Mel.* Now, by my soul, I will not go 'till I have made known my wrongs—Nay, 'till I have made known yours, which (if possible) are greater—though she has all the host of hell her servants.

*Lady T.* Alas, he raves! "Talks very poetry." For heaven's sake away, my lord; he'll either tempt you to extravagance, or commit some himself.

*Mel.* Death and furies, will you not hear me—Why, by Heaven she laughs, grins, points to your back; she forks out cuckoldom with her fingers, and you are running horn-mad after your fortune.

[*As she is going she turns back and smiles at him.*]

*Lord T.* I fear he's mad indeed—Let's send Maskwell to him.

*Mel.* Send him to her.

"*Lady T.* Come, come, good my lord, my heart aches so, I shall faint if I stay." [*Exeunt Lord and Lady Touchwood.*]

*Mel.* Oh, I could curse my stars, fate, and chance; all causes and accidents of fortune in this life! But to what purpose? "Yet, 'sdeath, for a man to have the fruit of all his industry grow full and ripe, ready to drop into his mouth, and just when he holds out his hand to gather it, to have a sudden whirlwind come, tear up tree and all, and bear away the very root and foundation of his hopes. What temper can contain?" They talk of sending Maskwell to me; I never had more need of him—But what can he do? Imagination cannot form a fairer and more plausible design than this of his which has miscarried—O, my precious aunt! I shall never thrive without I deal with the devil, or another woman.

"*Women, like flames, have a destroying power,*

"*Ne'er to be quench'd 'till they themselves devour.*" [*Exit.*]

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ACT V. SCENE I.

*Enter Lady TOUCHWOOD and MASKWELL.*

*Lady Touchwood.*

WAS it not lucky?

*Mask.* Lucky! Fortune is your own, and 't is her interest so to be; by Heaven I believe you can controul her power, and she fears it; though chance brought my lord, 't was your own art that turned it to advantage.

*Lady T.* 'T is true, it might have been my ruin——But yonder's my lord, I believe he is coming to find you, I'll not be seen. *[Exit.*

*Mask.* So; I durst not own my introducing my lord, though it succeeded well for her, for she would have suspected a design which I should have been puzzled to excuse. My lord is thoughtful—I'll be so too; yet he shall know my thoughts; or think he does——

*Enter Lord TOUCHWOOD.*

What have I done?

*Lord T.* Talking to himself!

*Mask.* 'T was honest—and shall I be rewarded for it? No, 't was honest, therefore I shall not: Nay, rather therefore I ought not; for it rewards itself.

*Lord T.* Unequalled virtue! *[Aside.*

*Mask.* But should it be known! then I have lost a friend! He was an ill man, and I have gained; for half myself I lent him, and that I have recalled! so I have served myself, and what is yet better, I have served a worthy lord, to whom I owe myself.



*Lord T.* Excellent man !

[*Aside.*

*Mask.* Yet I am wretched—O, there is a secret burns within this breast, which, should it once blaze forth, would ruin all, consume my honest character, and brand me with the name of villain.

*Lord T.* Ha !

*Mask.* Why do I love ! Yet Heaven and my waking conscience are my witnesses, I never gave one working thought a vent, which might discover that I loved, nor ever must ; no, let it prey upon my heart ; for I would rather die than seem once, barely seem, once dishonest :—O, should it once be known I love fair Cynthia, all this that I have done would look like rival's malice, false friendship to my lord, and base self-interest. Let me perish first, and from this hour avoid all sight and speech, and, if I can, all thought of that pernicious beauty. Ha ! but what is my distraction doing ? I am wildly talking to myself, and some ill chance might have directed malicious ears this way.

[*Seems to start, seeing my Lord.*

*Lord T.* Start not—let guilty and dishonest souls start at the revelation of their thoughts, but be thou fixed, as is thy virtue.

*Mask.* I am confounded, and beg your lordship's pardon for those free discourses which I have had with myself.

*Lord T.* Come, I beg your pardon that I over-heard you, and yet it shall not need—Honest Maskwell ! thy and my good genius led me hither—mine, in that I have discovered so much manly virtue ; thine, in that thou shalt have due reward of all thy worth. Give me thy hand—my nephew is the alone remaining branch of all our ancient family ; him I thus blow away, and constitute thee in his room to be my heir—

*Mask.* Now Heaven forbid—

*Lord T.* No more—I have resolved—The writings are ready drawn, and wanted nothing but to be signed, and have

his name inserted—Yours will fill the blank as well—I will have no reply—Let me command this time, for 't is the last in which I will assume authority—hereafter you shall rule where I have power.

*Mask.* I humbly would petition——

*Lord T.* Is it for yourself? [*Maskwell pauses.*] I'll hear of nought for any body else.

*Mask.* Then witness, Heaven, for me, this wealth and honour was not of my seeking, nor would I build my fortune on another's ruin: I had but one desire——

*Lord T.* Thou shalt enjoy it.——If all I am worth in wealth or interest can purchase Cynthia, she is thine.——I am sure sir Paul's consent will follow fortune; I will quickly shew him which way that is going.

*Mask.* You oppress me with bounty; my gratitude is weak, and shrinks beneath the weight, and cannot rise to thank you——What, enjoy my love! Forgive the transports of a blessing so unexpected, so unhop'd for, so unthought of!

*Lord T.* I will confirm it, and rejoice with thee, [*Exit.*

*Mask.* This is prosperous indeed!—Why, let him find me out a villain, settled in possession of a fair estate, and full fruition of my love, I'll bear the railings of a losing gamester—But should he find me out before!—'t is dangerous to delay—Let me think——Should my lord proceed to treat openly of my marriage with Cynthia, all must be discovered, and Mellefont can be no longer blinded.—It must not be; nay, should my lady know it—Ay, then were fine work indeed! Her fury would spare nothing, though she involved herself in ruin. No, it must be by stratagem——I must deceive Mellefont once more, and get my lord to consent to my private management. He comes opportunely——Now will I, in my old way, discover the whole and real truth of the matter to him, that he may not suspect one word on 't.

*No mask like open truth to cover lies,  
As to go naked is the best disguise.*

*Enter MELLEFONT.*

*Mel.* O, Maskwell, what hopes? I am confounded in a maze of thoughts, each leading into another, and all ending in perplexity. My uncle will not see nor hear me.

*Mask.* No matter, sir, don't trouble your head, all is in my power.

*Mel.* How, for Heaven's sake?

*Mask.* Little do you think that your aunt has kept her word —How the devil she wrought my lord into this dotage I know not; but he is gone to sir Paul about my marriage with Cynthia, and has appointed me his heir.

*Mel.* The devil he has! What's to be done?

*Mask.* I have it, it must be by stratagem; for it is in vain to make application to him. I think I have that in my head which cannot fail. Where is Cynthia?

*Mel.* In the garden.

*Mask.* Let us go and consult her:—My life for yours, I cheat my lord. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter Lord and Lady TOUCHWOOD.*

*Lady T.* Maskwell your heir, and marry Cynthia!

*Lord T.* I cannot do too much for so much merit.

*Lady T.* But this is a thing of too great moment to be so suddenly resolved. Why Cynthia? Why must he be married? Is there not reward enough in raising his low fortune, but he must mix his blood with mine, and wed my niece? How know you that my brother will consent, or she? Nay, he himself perhaps may have affections elsewhere.

*Lord T.* No, I am convinced he loves her.

*Lady T.* Maskwell love Cynthia, impossible!

*Lord T.* I tell you, he confessed it to me.

*Lady T.* Confusion! how is this!

[*Aside.*

*Lord T.* His humility long stifled his passion; and his love of Mellefont would have made him still conceal it: but by encouragement I wrung the secret from him, and know he is no way to be rewarded but in her. I will defer my farther proceedings in it 'till you have considered it: but remember how we are both indebted to him.

[*Exit.*

*Lady T.* Both indebted to him! Yes, we are both indebted to him, if you knew all, "villain!" Oh! I am wild with this surprize of treachery: it is impossible, it cannot be—He love Cynthia? "What, have I been bawd to his designs!" his property only, "a baiting place! Now I see what made him false" "to Mellefont—Shame and distraction! I cannot bear it, Oh!" "What woman can bear to be a property? To be kindled to a flame, only to light him to another's arms: Oh! that I were fire indeed, that I might burn the vile traitor." What shall I do? How shall I think? I cannot think—All my designs are lost, my love unsated, my revenge unfinished, and fresh cause of fury from unthought-of plagues.

*Enter Sir PAUL.*

*Sir P.* Madam, sister, my lady sister, did you see my lady, my wife?

*Lady T.* Oh! Torture!

*Sir P.* Gads-bud, I cannot find her high nor low. Where can she be, think you?

*Lady T.* Where she is serving you as all your sex ought to be served; making you a beast. Don't you know that you are a fool, brother?

*Sir P.* A fool; he, he, he, you are merry—No, no, not I, I know no such matter.

*Lady T.* Why then you don't know half your happiness.

*Sir P.* That's a jest with all my heart, faith and troth—But hark ye, my lord told me something of a revolution of things; I don't know what to make on 't—Gads-bud I must consult my wife—He talks of disinheriting his nephew, and I don't know what—Look you, sister, I must know what my girl has to trust to; or not a syllable of a wedding, gads-bud—to shew you that I am not a fool.

*Lady T.* Hear me; consent to the breaking off this marriage, and the promoting any other, without consulting me, and I will renounce all blood, all relation and concern with you for ever—Nay, I'll be your enemy, and pursue you to destruction; I'll tear your eyes out, and tread you under my feet.—

*Sir P.* Why, what's the matter now? Good Lord, what's all this for? Pooh, here's a joke indeed—Why, where's my wife?

*Lady T.* With Careless, in the close harbour; he may want you by this time, as much as you want her.

*Sir P.* Oh, if she be with Mr. Careless, 't is well enough.

*Lady T.* Fool, sot, insensible ox! But remember what I said to you, or you had better eat your own horns by this light you had.

*Sir P.* You are a passionate woman, gads-bud—But to say truth, all our family are choleric; I am the only peaceable person amongst them. [Exeunt.]

*Enter MELLEFONT, MASKWELL, and CYNTHIA.*

*Mel.* I know no other way but this he has proposed; if you have love enough to run the venture.

*Cyn.* I don't know whether I have love enough—but I find I have obstinacy enough to pursue whatever I have once resolved; and a true female courage to oppose any thing that resists my will, though it were reason itself.

*Mask.* That's right—Well, I'll secure the writings, and run the hazard along with you.



*Cyn.* But how can the coach and six horses be got ready without suspicion?

*Mask.* Leave it to my care; that shall be so far from being suspected, that it shall be got ready by my lord's own order.

*Mel.* How?

*Mask.* Why, I intend to tell my lord the whole matter of our contrivance, that's my way.

*Mel.* I do not understand you.

*Mask.* Why, I'll tell my lord I laid this plot with you on purpose to betray you; and that which put me upon it, was the finding it impossible to gain the lady any other way, but in the hopes of her marrying you.

*Mel.* So——

*Mask.* So, why so, while you are busied in making yourself ready, I'll wheedle her into the coach; and instead of you, borrow my lord's chaplain, and so run away with her myself.

*Mel.* O; I conceive you, you'll tell him so.

*Mask.* Tell him so! Ay, why you do n't think I mean to do so.

*Mel.* No, no; ha, ha, I dare swear thou wilt not.

*Mask.* Therefore, for our farther security I would have you disguised like a parson, that if my lord should have curiosity to peep, he may not discover you in the coach, but think the cheat is carried on as he would have it.

*Mel.* Excellent Maskwell! thou wert certainly meant for a statesman or a jesuit—but thou art too honest for one, and too pious for the other.

*Mask.* Well, get yourselves ready, and meet me in half an hour yonder in my lady's dressing-room; go by the back-stairs, and so we may slip down without being observed—I'll send the chaplain to you with his robes; I have made him my own—and ordered him to meet us to-morrow morning at St. Albans; there we will sum up this account to all our satisfactions.

*Mel.* Should I begin to thank or praise thee, I should waste the little time we have. [Exit.]

*Mask.* Madam, you will be ready.

*Cyn.* I will be punctual to the minute. [Going.]

*Mask.* Stay, I have a doubt—Upon second thoughts, we had better meet in the chaplain's chamber here, the corner chamber at this end of the gallery; there is a back way into it, so that you need not come through this door—and a pair of private stairs leading down to the stables—it will be more convenient.

*Cyn.* I am guided by you—But Mellefont will mistake.

*Mask.* No, no, I'll after him immediately, and tell him.

*Cyn.* I will not fail. [Exit.]

*Mask.* Why, *qui vult decipi decipiat*.—'Tis no fault of mine, I have told them in plain terms how easy it is for me to cheat them; and if they will not hear the serpent's hiss, they must be stung into experience and future caution.—Now to prepare my lord to consent to this.—But first I must instruct my little Levite; there is no plot, public or private, that can expect to prosper without one of them has a finger in it; he promised me to be within at this hour—Mr. Saygrace, Mr. Saygrace. [Goes to the chamber door, and knocks.]

[*Mr. Saygrace looking out.*] Sweet sir, I will but pen the last line of an acrostic, and be with you in the twinkling of an ejaculation, in the pronouncing of an Amen, or before you can——

*Mask.* Nay, good Mr. Saygrace, do not prolong the time by describing to me the shortness of your stay; rather, if you please, defer the finishing of your wit, and let us talk about our business; it shall be tithes in your way.

*Enter SAYGRACE.*

*Sayg.* You shall prevail; I would break off in the middle of a sermon to do you a pleasure.

*Mask.* You could not do me a greater—except—the business in hand—Have you provided a habit for Mellefont?

*Sayg.* I have; they are ready in my chamber, together with a clean starched band and cuffs.

*Mask.* Good: let them be carried to him—Have you stiched the gown-sleeve, that he may be puzzled and waste time in putting it on?

*Sayg.* I have; the gown will not be indued without perplexity.

*Mask.* Meet me in half an hour, here in your own chamber. When Cynthia comes, let there be no light; and do not speak, that she may not distinguish you from Mellefont. I'll urge haste to excuse your silence.

*Sayg.* You have no more commands?

*Mask.* None, your text is short.

*Sayg.* But pithy, and I will handle it with discretion.

*Mask.* It will be the first you have so served. [Exeunt.]

*Enter Lord TOUCHWOOD and MASKWELL.*

*Lord T.* Sure I was born to be controuled by those I should command; my very slaves will shortly give me rules how I shall govern them.

*Mask.* I am concerned to see your lordship discomposed—

*Lord T.* Have you seen my wife lately, or disoblged her?

*Mask.* No, my lord.—What can this mean? [Aside.]

*Lord T.* Then Mellefont has urged somebody to incense her—Something she has heard of you, which carries her beyond the bounds of patience.

*Mask.* This I feared. [Aside.] Did not your lordship tell her of the honours you designed me?

*Lord T.* Yes.

*Mask.* 'T is that; you know my lady has a high spirit, she thinks I am unworthy.

*Lord T.* Unworthy! 'T is an ignorant pride in her to think so—Honesty to me is true nobility. However, 'tis my will it shall be so, and that should be convincing to her as much as reason—By Heaven, I'll not be wife ridden! Were it possible, it should be done this night.

*Mask.* By Heaven he meets my wishes! [*Aside.*] Few things are impossible to willing minds.

*Lord T.* Instruct me how this may be done, you shall see I want no inclination.

*Mask.* I had laid a small design for to-morrow (as love will be inventing) which I thought to communicate to your lordship—But it may be as well done to-night.

*Lord T.* Here is company—Come this way, and tell me.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter CARELESS and CYNTHIA.*

*Care.* Is not that he, now gone out with my lord?

*Cyn.* Yes.

*Care.* By Heaven there's treachery—The confusion that I saw your father in, my lady Touchwood's passion, with what imperfectly I overheard between my lord and her, confirm me in my fears. Where's Mellefont?

*Cyn.* Here he comes.

*Enter MELLEFONT.*

—Did Maskwell tell you any thing of the chaplain's chamber?

*Mel.* No; my dear will you get ready?—The things are all in my chamber; I want nothing but the habit.

*Care.* You are betrayed, and Maskwell is the villain I always thought him.

*Cyn.* When you were gone, he said his mind was changed, and bid me meet him in the chaplain's room, pretending immediately to follow you, and give you notice.

*Care.* There's Saygrace tripping by with a bundle under his arm—He cannot be ignorant that Maskwell means to use his chamber; let's follow and examine him.

*Mel.* 'Tis loss of time—I cannot think him false.

[*Exeunt Mel. and Care.*]

*Enter Lord TOUCHWOOD.*

*Cyn.* My lord, musing!

*Lord T.* He has a quick invention, if this were suddenly designed—Yet he says he had prepared my chaplain already.

*Cyn.* How is this? Now I fear, indeed.

*Lord T.* Cynthia here! Alone, fair cousin, and melancholy?

*Cyn.* Your Lordship was thoughtful.

*Lord T.* My thoughts were on serious business, not worth your hearing.

*Cyn.* Mine were on treachery concerning you, and may be worth your hearing.

*Lord T.* Treachery concerning me! Pray, be plain——  
Hark! What noise?

*Mask.* [*Within.*] Will you not hear me?

*Lady T.* [*Within.*] No, monster! Traitor! No.

*Cyn.* My lady and Maskwell!—This may be lucky—My lord let me intreat you to stand behind this screen, and listen; perhaps this chance may give you proof of what you never could have believed from my suspicions.

*Enter Lady TOUCHWOOD, with a dagger, and MASKWELL.*

[*Cynthia and Lord Touchwood abscond, listening.*]

*Lady T.* You want but leisure to invent fresh falshood, and sooth me to a fond belief of all your fictions; but I will stab the lie that's forming in your heart, and save a sin in pity to your soul.



*Mask.* Strike then—since you will have it so.

*Lady T.* Ha! a steady villain to the last!

*Mask.* Come, why do you dally with me thus?

“ *Lady T.* Thy stubborn temper shocks me, and you know  
“ it would—This is cunning all, and not courage; no, I know  
“ thee well—but thou shalt miss thy aim.”

*Mask.* Ha, ha, ha.

*Lady T.* Ha! Do you mock my rage? Then this shall punish your fond, rash contempt! Again smile! [*Goes to strike.*  
And such a smile as speaks in ambiguity!  
Ten thousand meanings lurk in each corner of that various face.  
O! that they were written in thy heart,  
That I, with this, might lay thee open to my sight!  
But then 't will be too late to know——

Thou hast, thou hast found the only way to turn my rage; too well thou knowest my jealous soul could never bear uncertainty. Speak then, and tell me——Yet are you silent? Oh, I am wilder in all passions! But thus my anger melts. [*Weeps.*] Here, take this poinard, for my very spirits faint, and I want strength to hold it, thou hast disarmed my soul. [*Gives the dagger.*

*Lord T.* Amazement shakes me—Where will this end?

*Mask.* So, 't is well——let your wild fury have a vent, and when you have temper, tell me.

*Lady T.* Now, now, now I am calm, and can hear you.

*Mask.* [*Aside.*] Thanks, my invention: and now I have it for you.—First tell me, what urged you to this violence? For your passion broke out in such imperfect terms, that yet I am to learn the cause.

*Lady T.* My lord himself surprized me with the news, you were to marry Cynthia—That you had owned your love to him, and his indulgence would assist you to attain your ends.

*Cyn.* How, my Lord!

*Lord T.* Pray forbear all resentments for a while, and let us hear the rest.

*Mask.* I grant you in appearance all is true ; I seemed consenting to my Lord ; nay, transported with the blessing—— But could you think that I, who had been happy in your loved embraces, could e'er be fond of inferior slavery ?

*Cyn.* Nay, good my Lord, forbear resentment, let us hear it out.

*Lord T.* Yes, I will contain, though I could burst.

*Mask.* I that had wantoned in the rich circle of your world of love, could be confined within the puny province of a girl ? No——Yet tho' I dote on each last favour more than the rest, though I would give a limb for every look you cheaply throw away on any other object of your love : yet so far I prize your pleasures o'er my own, that all this seeming plot that I have laid, has been to gratify your taste, and cheat the world, to prove a faithful rogue to you.

*Lady T.* If this were true——But how can it be ?

*Mask.* I have so contrived, that Mellefont will presently, in the chaplain's habit, wait for Cynthia in your dressing-room : but I have put the change upon her, that she may be elsewhere employed——Do you procure her night-gown, and with your hoods tied over your face, meet him in her stead ; you may go privately by the back-stairs, and, unperceived, there you may propose to reinstate him in his uncle's favour, if he will comply with your desires ; his case is desperate, and I believe he'll yield to any conditions——If not, here, take this ; you may employ it better than in the heart of one who is nothing when not yours.

[Gives the dagger.]

*Lady T.* Thou canst deceive every body——Nay, thou hast deceived me ; but 't is as I would wish——Trusty villain ! I could worship thee.——

*Mask.* No more—it wants but a few minutes of the time; and Mellefont's love will carry him there before his hour.

*Lady T.* I go, I fly, incomparable Maskwell! [Exit.

*Mask.* So, this was a pinch indeed; my invention was upon the rack, and made discovery of her last plot: I hope Cynthia and my chaplain will be ready. I'll prepare for the expedition.

[Exit.

*CYNTHIA and Lord TOUCHWOOD come forward.*

*Cyn.* Now, my Lord!

*Lord T.* Astonishment binds up my rage! Villany upon villany! Heavens, what a long track of dark deceit has this discovered! I am confounded when I look back, and what a clue to guide me through the various mazes of unheard-of treachery. My wife! Damnation! My hell!

*Cyn.* My Lord, have patience, and be sensible how great our happiness is, that this discovery was not made too late.

*Lord T.* I thank you, yet it may be still too late, if we don't presently prevent the execution of their plots:—Ha! I'll do it. Where is Mellefont, my poor injured nephew? How shall I make him ample satisfaction?

*Cyn.* I dare answer for him.

*Lord T.* I do him fresh wrong to question his forgiveness, for I know him to be all goodness——Yet my wife! Damn her——She'll think to meet him in that dressing-room—Was't not so? And Maskwell will expect you in the chaplain's chamber——For once I'll add my plot too——let us haste to find out, and inform my nephew; and do you, quickly as you can, bring all the company into this gallery.—I'll expose the strumpet and the villain.

[Exeunt.

*Enter Lord FROTH and Sir PAUL.*

*Lord F.* By Heavens, I have slept an age—Sir Paul, what

o'clock is it? Past eight, on my conscience, my Lady's is the most inviting couch, and a slumber there is the prettiest amusement! But where is all the company?

*Sir P.* The company, Gad's-bud, I don't know, my Lord; but here's the strangest revolution, all turned topsy-turvy, as I hope for Providence.

*Lord F.* O, Heavens! What's the matter? Where is my wife?

*Sir P.* All turned topsy-turvy, as sure as a gun.

*Lord F.* How do you mean? My wife!

*Sir P.* The strangest posture of affairs!

*Lord F.* What, my wife?

*Sir P.* No, no, I mean the family. Your lady's affairs may be in a very good posture; I saw her go into the garden with Mr. Brisk.

*Lord F.* How? Where, when, what to do?

*Sir P.* I suppose they have been laying their heads together.

*Lord F.* How?

*Sir P.* Nay, only about poetry, I suppose, my lord; making couplets.

*Lord F.* Couplets.

*Sir P.* O, here they come.

*Enter Lady FROTH and BRISK.*

*Brisk.* My lord, your humble servant; sir Paul, yours—  
The finest night!

*Lady F.* My dear, Mr. Brisk and I have been star-gazing I do n't know how long.

*Sir P.* Does it not tire your ladyship? Are not you weary with looking up?

*Lady F.* Oh, no! I love it violently—My dear, you are melancholy.

*Lord F.* No, my dear, I am but just awake.

*Lady F.* Snuff some of my spirit of hartshorn.

*Lord F.* I have some of my own, thank you, my dear.

*Lady F.* Well, I swear, Mr. Brisk, you understood astronomy like an old Egyptian.

*Brisk.* Not comparably to your ladyship; you are the very Cynthia of the skies, and queen of stars.

*Lady F.* That's because I have no light, but what's by reflexion from you, who are the sun.

*Brisk.* Madam, you have eclipsed me quite, let me perish——I cannot answer that.

*Lady F.* No matter——Hark'e, shall you and I make an almanack together?

*Brisk.* With all my soul,——Your ladyship has made me the man in it already, I am so full of the wounds which you have given.

*Lady F.* O, finely taken! I swear now you are even with me; O, Parnassus, you have an infinite deal of wit.

*Sir P.* So he has, Gads-bud, and so has your ladyship.

*Enter Lady PLYANT, CARELESS, and CYNTHIA.*

*Lady P.* You tell me most surprizing things; bless me, who would ever trust a man? O, my heart aches for fear they should be all deceitful alike.

*Care.* You need not fear, madam, you have charms to fix inconstancy itself.

*Lady P.* O dear, you make me blush.

*Lord F.* Come, my dear, shall we take leave of my lord and lady?

*Cyn.* They'll wait upon your lordship presently.

*Lady F.* Mr. Brisk, my coach shall set you down.

*All.* What's the matter?

[A great shriek from the corner of the stage.]



*Enter Lady TOUCHWOOD, and runs out affrighted, my lord after her, like a parson.*

*Lady T.* O, I'm betrayed——Save me, help me!

*Lord T.* Now, what evasion, strumpet?

*Lady T.* Stand off, let me go.

*Lord T.* Go, and thy own infamy pursue thee—You stare as you were all amazed——I do not wonder at it,——But too soon you'll know mine, and that woman's shame.

*Enter MELLEFONT, disguised in a parson's habit, and pulling in MASKWELL.*

*Mel.* Nay, by Heaven you shall be seen——Careless, your hand—Do you hold down your head? Yes, I am your chaplain; look in the face of your injured friend, thou wonder of all falsehood.

*Lord T.* Are you silent, monster?

*Mel.* Good Heavens! How I believed and loved this man!—Take him hence, for he is a disease to my sight.

*Lord T.* Secure that manifold villain. [*Servants seize him.*

*Care.* Miracle of ingratitude!

*Brisk.* This is all very surprizing, let me perish.

*Lady F.* You know I told you Saturn looked a little more angry than usual.

*Lord T.* We'll think of punishment at leisure, but let me hasten to do justice, in rewarding virtue and wronged innocence.——Nephew, I hope I have your pardon, and Cynthia's.

*Mel.* We are your lordship's creatures.

*Lord T.* And be each other's comfort:—Let me join your hands——Unwearied nights, and wishing days attend you both; mutual love, lasting health, and circling joys, tread round each happy year of your long lives.

*Let secret villany from hence be warn'd;  
Howe'er in private mischiefs are conceiv'd,  
Torture and shame attend their open birth:  
Like wipers in the womb, base treachery lies  
Still gnawing that whence first it did arise;  
No sooner born, but the wile parent dies.* [Exeunt.

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## EPILOGUE.

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*COULD* poets but foresee 'how plays would take,  
Then they could tell what epilogues to make;  
Whether to thank or blame their audience most:  
But that late knowledge does much hazard cost,  
'Till dice are thrown, there's nothing won, nor lost.  
So, 'till the thief has stol'n, he cannot know  
Whether he shall escape the law, or no.  
But poets run much greater hazard far,  
Than they who stand their trials at the bar;  
The law provides a curb for its own fury,  
And suffers judges to direct the jury.  
But in this court, what difference does appear!  
For every one's both judge and jury here;  
Nay, and what's worse, an executioner.  
All have a right and title to some part,  
Each choosing that in which he has most art.  
The dreadful men of learning all confound,  
Unless the fable's good, and moral sound.  
The vizor-masks that are in pit and gallery,  
Approve or damn the repartee and raillery.  
The lady critics, who are better read,  
Inquire if characters are nicely bred;  
If the soft things are penn'd and spoke with grace:  
They judge of action too, and time, and place;  
In which we do not doubt but they're discerning,  
For that's a kind of assignation learning.  
Beaus judge of dress; the wittlings judge of songs;  
The cuckoldom, of ancient right, to cits belongs.

*Thus poor poets the favour are deny'd,  
Even to make exceptions, when they're try'd.  
'Tis hard that they must every one admit:  
Methinks I see some faces in the pit,  
Which must of consequence be foes to wit.  
You who can judge, to sentence may proceed;  
But tho' he cannot write, let him be freed,  
At least, from their contempt who cannot read.*

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7 JUL 52

THE KATCHELON

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THE  
*OLD BATCHELOR.*

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A  
COMEDY,

---

*BY WILLIAM CONGREVE, ESQ.*

---

ADAPTED FOR  
THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,  
AS PERFORMED AT THE  
*THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.*

---

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOK,  
*By Permission of the Manager.*

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The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation.

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LONDON:

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*Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of*  
JOHN BELL, *British Library*, STRAND,  
Bookseller to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

M DCC XCV.

OLD BATCHER



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PROLOGUE.

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*HOW* this wile world is chang'd! In former days,  
Prologues were serious speeches before plays;  
Grave solemn things, as graces are to feasts;  
Where poets begg'd a blessing from their guests:  
But now, no more like suppliants we come;  
A play makes war, and prologue is the drum;  
Arm'd with keen satire, and with pointed wit,  
We threaten you who do for judges sit,  
To save our plays, or else we'll damn your pit.  
But for your comfort, it falls out to day,  
We've a young author, and his first-born play;  
So, standing only on his good behaviour,  
He's very civil, and intreats your favour.  
Not but the man has malice, ~~would he shew it,~~  
But, on my conscience, he's a ~~base~~ <sup>hateful</sup> poet;  
You think that strange—no matter, he'll out-grow it.  
Well, I'm his advocate—by me he prays you,  
(I do n't know whether I shall speak to please you)  
He prays—O, bless me! what shall I do now?  
Hang me if I know what he prays, or how!  
And 't was the prettiest prologue as he wrote it!  
Well, the deuce take me, if I ha' n't forgot it.  
O, lord! for Heaven's sake, excuse the play,  
Because, you know, if it be damn'd to-day,  
I shall be hang'd for wanting what to say.  
For my sake then—But I'm in such confusion,  
I cannot stay to bear your resolution.

[Runs off.]

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## Dramatis Personae.

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### COVENT-GARDEN.

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#### Men,

HEARTWELL, a surly old bachelor, pretending to slight women, secretly in love with Silvia,	- - -	Mr. Ryder.
BELLMOUR, in love with Belinda,	- - -	Mr. Lewis.
VAINLOVE, capricious in his love, in love with Araminta,	- - -	Mr. Macready.
SHARPER,	- - -	Mr. Farren.
Sir JOSEPH WITTOL,	- - -	Mr. Blanchard.
Captain BLUFF,	- - -	Mr. Cubitt.
FONDLEWIFE, a banker,	- - -	Mr. Quick.
SETTER, a pimp,	- - -	Mr. Bernard.
Servant to Fondlewife,	- - -	Mr. Ledger.

#### Women.

ARAMINTA, in love with Vainlove,	- - -	Miss Chapman.
BELINDA, her cousin, an affected lady, in love with Bellmour,	- - -	Mrs. Pope.
LÆTITIA, wife to Fondlewife,	- - -	Mrs. Abington.
SILVIA, Vainlove's forsaken mistress,	- - -	Mrs. Mountain.
LUCY, her maid,	- - -	Miss Stuart.
BETTY,	- - -	Miss Leserve.
Boy,	- - -	Miss Standing.
Footman,	- - -	Mrs. Evatt.

SCENE, London.

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7 JUL 52

Act IV

THE OLD BATCHELOR.

Scene IV



After the original.

Engraved by J. Smith.

MR. FOOTE as FONDLEWIFE.

*Observe us! What's the matter? What's the matter?*

London: Printed for J. Fell, Printh Library, Strand, May 15 1726.



By order of the

London. Printed for J. Ball, Smith's Library, Strand. May 7 1736

W. Mason sculpsit

7 JU 52



## THE OLD BATCHELOR.

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### ACT I. SCENE I.

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*The Street.* BELLMOUR and VAINLOVE, meeting.

*Bellmour.*

VAINLOVE, and abroad so early! Good morrow; I thought a contemplative lover could no more have parted with his bed in a morning, than he could have slept in 't.

*Vain.* Bellmour, good morrow—Why, the truth on 't is, these early sallies are not usual to me; but business, as you see, sir—*[Shewing letters.]* And business must be followed, or be lost.

*Bell.* Business!—And so must time, my friend, be close pursued or lost. Business is the rub of life, perverts our aim, casts off the bias, and leaves us wide and short of the intended mark.

*Vain.* Pleasure, I guess, you mean.

*Bell.* Ay, what else has meaning?

*Vain.* Oh, the wise will tell you—

*Bell.* More than they believe—or understand.

*Vain.* How, how, Ned, a wise man say more than he understands?

*Bell.* Ay, ay, wisdom's nothing but a pretending to know and believe more than we really do. You read of but one wise man, and all that he knew was, that he knew nothing. Come,



come, leave business to idlers, and wisdom to fools; they have need of 'em: wit be my faculty, and pleasure my occupation; and let father Time shake his glass. Let low and earthly souls grovel 'till they have work'd themselves six feet deep into a grave—Business is not my element—I roll in a higher orb, and dwell——

*Vain.* In castles i' th' air, of thy own building; that's thy element, Ned—Well, as high a flier as you are, I have a lure may make you stoop. [Flings a letter.]

*Bell.* Aye, marry, sir, I have a hawk's eye at a woman's hand—There's more elegance in the false spelling of this superscription [Takes up the letter.] than in all Cicero—Let me see—How now! *Dear, perfidious Vainlove.* [Reads.]

*Vain.* Hold, hold, 'slife, that's the wrong.——

*Bell.* Nay, let's see the name; [Silvia!] how can'st thou be ungrateful to that creature? She's extremely pretty, and loves thee entirely—I have heard her breathe such raptures about thee——

*Vain.* Ay, or any body that she's about——

*Bell.* No, faith, Frank, you wrong her; she has been just to you.

*Vain.* That's pleasant, by my troth, from thee, who hast had her.

*Bell.* Never, her affections: 't is true, by Heav'n, she own'd it to my face; “and blushing like the virgin morn, when it “disclos'd the cheat which that trusty bawd of nature, night, “had hid,” confess'd her soul was true to you, though I by treachery had stolen the bliss——

*Vain.* So was true as turtle——in imagination, Ned, ha? Preach this doctrine to husbands, and the married women will adore thee.

*Bell.* Why, faith I think it will do well enough—if the husband be out of the way, for the wife to shew her fondness and

impatience of his absence, by choosing a lover as like him as she can, and what is unlike, she may help out with her own fancy.

*Vain.* But is it not an abuse to the lover to be made a blind of?

*Bell.* As you say, the abuse is to the lover, not the husband; for 't is an argument of her zeal towards him, that she will enjoy him in effigy.

*Vain.* It must be a very superstitious country, where such zeal passes for true devotion. I doubt it will be damn'd by all our protestant husbands for flat idolatry——But if you can make alderman Fondlewife of your persuasion, this letter will be needless.

*Bell.* What, the old banker, with the handsome wife?

*Vain.* Ay.

*Bell.* Let me see, Lætitia! Oh, 't is a delicious morsel. Dear Frank, thou art the truest friend in the world.

*Vain.* Ay, am I not? to be continually starting of hares for you to course. We were certainly cut out for one another; for my temper quits an amour, just where thine takes it up——But read that, it is an appointment for me, this evening, when Fondlewife will be gone out of town to meet the master of a ship, about the return of a venture which he's in danger of losing. Read, read.

*Bell.* [*Reads.*] Hum, hum——*Out of town this evening, and talks of sending for Mr. Spintext to keep me company; but I'll take care he shall not be at home.* Good! Spintext! Oh, the fanatick one-ey'd parson!

*Vain.* Ay.

*Bell.* [*Reads.*] Hum, hum——*That your conversation will be much more agreeable, if you can counterfeit his habit to blind the servants.* Very good! Then I must be disguised——With all my heart——“ It adds a gusto to an amour; gives it the

“ greater resemblance of theft; and, among us lewd mortals, the deeper the sin, the sweeter.” Frank, I’m amaz’d at thy good-nature——

*Vain.* Faith, I hate love, when ’t is forc’d upon a man, as I do wine——And this business is none of my seeking; I only happened to be once or twice where Lætitia was the handsomest woman in company, so, consequently, apply’d myself to her——And it seems she has taken me at my word——Had you been there, or any body, it had been the same.

*Bell.* I wish I may succeed as the same.

*Vain.* Never doubt it; “ for if the spirit of cuckoldom be once raised up in a woman, the devil can’t lay it, ’till she has don’t.”

*Bell.* Pry’thee what sort of fellow is Fondlewife?

*Vain.* A kind of mongrel zealot, sometimes very precise and peevish: but I have seen him pleasant enough in his way; much addicted to jealousy, but more to fondness: so that as he’s often jealous without a cause, he’s as often satisfied without reason.

*Bell.* A very even temper, and fit for my purpose. I must get your man Setter to provide my disguise.

*Vain.* Ay, you may take him for good and all, if you will; for you have made him fit for nobody else——Well——

*Bell.* You’re going to visit in return of Silvia’s letter——Poor rogue! any hour of the day or night will serve her——But do you know nothing of a new rival there?

*Vain.* Yes, Heartwell, that surly, old, pretended woman-hater, thinks her virtuous; that’s one reason why I fail her: I would have her fret herself out of conceit with me, that she may entertain some thoughts of him. I know he visits her every day.

*Bell.* Yet rails on still, and thinks his love unknown to us; a little time will swell him so, he must be forc’d to give it

birth; and the discovery must needs be very pleasant from himself; to see what pains he will take, and how he will strain to be delivered of a secret, when he has miscarried of it already.

*Vain.* Well, good morrow; let's dine together; I'll meet at the old place.

*Bell.* With all my heart; it lies convenient for us to pay our afternoon services to our mistresses; I find I am damnably in love, I'm so uneasy for not having seen Belinda yesterday.

*Vain.* But I saw my Araminta, yet am as impatient. [*Exit.*]

*Bell.* Why, what a cormorant in love am I! who not contented with the slavery of honourable love in one place, "and the pleasure of enjoying some half a score mistresses of my own acquiring," must yet take Vainlove's business upon my hands, because it lay too heavy upon his; "so am not only fore'd to lie with other men's wives for 'em, but must also undertake the harder task of obliging their mistresses—" I must take up, or I shall never hold out; "flesh and blood cannot bear it, always."

*Enter SHARPER.*

*Sharp.* I'm sorry to see this, Ned: if once a man comes to his soliloquies, I give him for gone.

*Bell.* Sharper, I'm glad to see thee.

*Sharp.* What, is Belinda cruel, that you are so thoughtful?

*Bell.* No, faith, not for that—But there's a business of consequence fall'n out to-day, that requires some consideration.

*Sharp.* Pr'ythee, what mighty business of consequence canst thou have?

*Bell.* Why, you must know 't is a piece of work towards the finishing of an alderman; it seems I must put the last hand to it, and dub him cuckold, that he may be of equal dignity with the rest of his brethren: so I must beg Belinda's pardon.

*Sharp.* Faith, e'en give her over for good and all: you can have no hopes of getting her for a mistress; and she is too proud, too inconstant, too affected, too witty, and too handsome for a wife.

*Bell.* But she can't have too much money—There's twelve thousand pounds, Tom.—'Tis true she is excessively foppish and affected: but, in my conscience, I believe the baggage loves me; for she never speaks well of me herself, nor suffers any body to rail at me. Then, as I told you, there's twelve thousand pounds—Hum—Why, faith, upon second thoughts, she does not appear to be very affected neither—Give her her due, I think the woman's a woman, and that's all. As such, I am sure I shall like her; for the devil take me if I don't love all the sex.

*Sharp.* And here comes one who swears as heartily he hates all the sex.

*Enter HEARTWELL.*

*Bell.* Who? Heartwell! Ay, but he knows better things—How now, George, where hast thou been snarling odious truths, “and entertaining company like a physician, with discourses of their diseases and infirmities? What fine lady hast thou been putting out of conceit with herself, and persuading, that the face she had been making all the morning, was “none of her own;” for I know thou art as unmannerly and as unwelcome to a woman, as a looking-glass after the small-pox.

*Heart.* I confess I have not been sneering fulsome lies, and nauseous flattery, fawning upon a little tawdry whore that will fawn upon me again, and entertain any puppy that comes, like a tumbler with the same tricks over and over: for such I guess, may have been your late employment.



*Bell.* Would thou had 'st come a little sooner, Vainlove would have wrought thy conversion, and been a champion for the cause.

*Heart.* What has he been here? That's one of love's April-fools, is always upon some errand that's to no purpose, ever embarking in adventures, yet never comes to harbour.

"*Sharp.* That's because he always sets out in foul weather, loves to buffet with the winds, meet the tide, and sail in the teeth of opposition.

"*Heart.* What, has he not dropt anchor at Araminta?

"*Bell.* Truth on 't is, she fits his temper best, is a kind of floating island; sometimes seems in reach, then vanishes, and keeps him busied in the search.

"*Sharp.* She had need have a good share of sense to manage so capricious a lover.

*Bell.* Faith, I don't know. - He's of a temper the most easy to himself in the world; "he takes as much always of an amour as he cares for, and quits it when it grows stale or unpleasant.

"*Sharp.* An argument of very little passion, very good understanding, and very ill nature.

"*Heart.* And proves that Vainlove plays the fool with discretion."

*Sharp.* You, Bellmour, are bound in gratitude to stickle for him; you with pleasure reap that fruit, which he takes pains to sow. He does the drudgery in the mine, and you stamp your image on the gold.

*Bell.* He's of another opinion, and says I do the drudgery in the mine. Well, we have each our share of sport, and each that which he likes best; 't is his diversion to set, 't is mine to cover the partridge.

*Heart.* And it should be mine to let 'em go again.

*Sharp.* Not 'till you have mouth'd a little, George, I think that's all thou art fit for now.

*Heart.* Good, Mr. young fellow, you're mistaken; as able as yourself, and as nimble too, though I may n't have so much mercury in my limbs. 'Tis true, indeed, I do n't force appetite, but "wait the natural call of my lust, and" think it time enough to be wicked, after I have had the temptation.

*Bell.* Time enough! ay, too soon, I should rather have expected from a person of your gravity.

*Heart.* Yet it is oftentimes too late with some of you young, termagant, flashy sinners—you have all the guilt of the intention, and none of the pleasure of the practice—'Tis true, you are so eager in pursuit of the temptation, that you save the devil the trouble of leading you into it; Nor is it out of discretion, that you don't swallow that very hook yourselves have baited, but you are cloy'd with the preparative, and what you mean for a whet turns the edge of your puny stomach. "Your love is like your courage, which you shew for the first year or two upon all occasions; 'till in a little time, being disabled or disarmed, you abate of your vigour; and that daring blade, which was so often drawn, is bound to the peace for ever hereafter."

*Bell.* Thou art an old fornicator of a singular good principle indeed! and art for encouraging youth, that they may be as wicked as thou art at thy years.

*Heart.* I am for having every body be what they pretend to be; "a whoremaster be a whoremaster;" and not like Vainlove, kiss a lap-dog with passion, when it would disgust him from the lady's own lips.

*Bell.* "That only happens sometimes, where the dog has the sweeter breath, for the more cleanly conveyance." But, George, you must not quarrel with little gallantries of this nature. Women are often won by 'em. Who would refuse to kiss a lap-dog if it were preliminary to the lips of his lady?

*Sharp.* Or omit playing with her fan, "and cooling her if she were hot, when it might intitle him to the office of warming her when she should be cold."

*Bell.* Or what is it to read a play in a rainy day! Though you should be now and then interrupted in a witty scene, and she perhaps preserve her laughter 'till the jest were over; even that may be borne with, considering the reward in prospect.

*Heart.* I confess, you that are women's asses, bear greater burdens; are forced to undergo dressing, dancing, singing, sighing, whining, rhyming, flattering, lying, grinning, cringing, and the drudgery of loving to boot.

*Bell.* O brute! the drudgery of loving!

*Heart.* Ay, why to come to love through all these incumbrances, is like coming to an estate overcharg'd with debts; which by the time you have paid, yields no further profit than what the bare tillage and manuring of the land will produce, at the expence of your own sweat.

*Bell.* Pr'ythee, how dost thou love?

*Sharp.* He! he hates the sex.

*Heart.* So I hate physick too—yet I may love to take it for my health.

*Bell.* Well come off, George, if at any time you should be taken straying.

*Sharp.* He has need of such an excuse, considering the present state of his body.

*Heart.* How d'ye mean?

*Sharp.* Why, if wenching be physick, as you call it, then I may say, marriage is entering into a course of physick.

*Bell.* How, George, does the wind blow there?

*Heart.* It will as soon blow north and by south—Marry, quotha! I hope in Heaven I have a greater portion of grace; and I think I have baited too many of those traps, to be caught in one myself.

*Bell.* Who the devil would have thee? unless 'twere an oyster-woman, to propagate young fry for Billingsgate.—Thy talent will never recommend thee to any thing of better quality.

*Heart.* My talent is chiefly that of speaking truth, which I don't expect should ever recommend me to people of quality—I thank Heaven, I have very honestly purchased the hatred of all the great families in town.

*Sharp.* And you, in return of spleen, hate them. But could you hope to be received into the alliance of a noble family?

*Heart.* No, I hope I shall never merit that affliction—to be punished with a wife of birth—be a stag of the first head, and bear my horns aloft, like one of the supporters of my wife's coat. 'Sdeath, I would not be a cuckold to e'er an illustrious whore in England.

*Bell.* What, not to make your family, man, and provide for your children?

*Sharp.* For her children, you mean.

*Heart.* Ay, there you 've nick'd it—there 's the devil upon devil—Oh, the pride and joy of heart 't would be to me, to have my son resemble such a duke—to have a fleering coxcomb scoff and cry, Mr. your son 's mighty like his grace, has just his smile and air of 's face. Then replies another—Methinks he has more of the marquis of such a place, about his nose and eyes; though he has my lord what-d' ye-call 's mouth to a tittle—Then I, to put it off as unconcerned, come chuck the infant under the chin, force a smile, and cry, Ay, the boy takes after his mother's relations—when the devil and she knows, 't is a little compound of the whole body of nobility.

*Bell. and Sharp.* Ha, ha, ha.

*Bell.* Well, but George, I have one question to ask you—

*Heart.* Pshaw, I have prattled away my time—I hope you are in no haste for an answer—for I sha n't stay now.

[*Looking on his watch.*]

*Bell.* Nay, pr'ythee, George——

*Heart.* No, besides my business, I see a fool coming this way. Adieu. [Exit.]

*Bell.* What does he mean? Oh, 'tis Sir Joseph Wittol, with his friend; but I see he has turned the corner, and goes another way.

*Sharp.* What, in the name of wonder, is it?

*Bell.* Why, a fool.

*Sharp.* 'Tis a tawdry outside.

*Bell.* And a very beggarly lining——yet he may be worth your acquaintance——A little of thy chemistry, Tom, may extract gold from that dirt.

*Sharp.* Say you so? 'Faith, I am as poor as a chemist, and would be as industrious. But what was he that followed him? Is not he a dragon that watches those golden pippins?

*Bell.* Hang him, no, he a dragon! if he be, 'tis a very peaceful one; I can insure his anger dormant; or should he seem to rouse, 'tis but well lashing him, and he will sleep like a top.

*Sharp.* Ay, is he of that kidney?

*Bell.* Yet is adored by that bigot, Sir Joseph Wittol, as the image of valour. He calls him his back, and indeed they are never asunder——yet last night, I know not by what mischance, the knight was alone, and had fallen into the hands of some night-walkers, who, I suppose, would have pillaged him: but I chanced to come by, and rescued him; though I believe he was heartily frightened, for as soon as ever he was loose he ran away, without staying to see who had helped him.

*Sharp.* Is that bully of his in the army?

*Bell.* No, but is a pretender, and wears the habit of a soldier; “which now-a-days as often cloaks cowardice, as a black gown does atheism.”——You must know he has been abroad——went purely to run away from a campaign; enriched himself



with the plunder of a few oaths—and here vents 'em against the general, who, slighting men of merit, and preferring only those of interest, has made him quit the service.

*Sharp.* Wherein, no doubt, he magnifies his own performance.

*Bell.* Speaks miracles; is the drum to his own praise—the only implement of a soldier he resembles; like that, being full of blustering noise and emptiness——

*Sharp.* And, like that, of no use but to be beaten.

*Bell.* Right; but then the comparison breaks; for he will take a drubbing with as little noise as a pulpit cushion.

*Sharp.* His name, and I have done.

*Bell.* Why, that, to pass it current too, he has gilded with a title; he is called captain Bluff.

*Sharp.* Well, I'll endeavour his acquaintance—you steer another course, are bound

*For love's island; I, for the golden coast.*

*May each succeed in what he wishes most.*

## ACT II. SCENE I.

*Sir JOSEPH WITTOL; SHAPER following.*

*Sharper.*

SURE that's he, and alone.

*Sir J.* Um——Ay, this, this is the very damned place: the inhuman cannibals, the bloody-minded villains, would have butcher'd me last night. No doubt, they would have flea'd me alive, have sold my skin, and devoured me.

*Sharp.* How's this?

*Sir J.* An it had n't been for a civil gentleman as came by and frightened 'em away—but, 'egad, I durst not stay to give him thanks.

*Sharp.* This must be Bellmour, he means—Ha! I have a thought.——

*Sir J.* Zook, would the captain would come; the very remembrance makes me quake; agad, I shall never be reconciled to this place heartily.

*Sharp.* 'Tis but trying, and being where I am at worst, now luck!—Curs'd fortune! this must be the place, this damn'd unlucky place—

*Sir J.* Agad, and so 'tis—Why here has been more mischief done, I perceive.

*Sharp.* No, 'tis gone, 'tis lost—ten thousand devils on that chance which drew me hither! Ay, here, just here; this spot to me is hell; nothing to be found, but the despair of what I've lost.

[*Looking about as in search.*]

*Sir J.* Poor gentleman—By the lord Harry, I'll stay no longer, for I have found too——

*Sharp.* Ha! who's that has found; What have you found? restore it quickly, or by——

*Sir J.* Not I, sir, not I, as I've a soul to be saved, I have found nothing but what has been to my loss, as I may say, and as you were saying, sir.

*Sharp.* O, your servant, sir, you are safe then it seems; 'tis an ill wind that blows nobody good. Well, you may rejoice over my ill-fortune, since it paid the price of your ransom.

*Sir J.* I rejoice! agad, not I, sir. I'm very sorry for your loss, with all my heart, blood and guts, sir; and if you did but know me, you'd ne'er say I were so ill-natur'd.

*Sharp.* Know you! Why can you be so ungrateful to forget me?

*Sir J.* O, lord, forget him! No, no, sir, I don't forget you—because I never saw your face before, agad. Ha, ha, ha.

*Sharp.* How!

[*Angrily.*]

*Sir J.* Stay, stay, sir, let me recollect—he's a damned angry fellow—I believe I had better remember him, till I can get out of his sight; but out o' sight out o' mind, agad. [*Aside.*]

*Sharp.* Methought the service I did you last night, sir, in preserving you from those ruffians, might have taken better root in your shallow memory.

*Sir J.* Gads-daggers-belts-blades and scabbards, this is the very gentleman! How shall I make him a return suitable to the greatness of his merit—I had a pretty thing to that purpose, if he ha'n't frighted it out of my memory. Hem! hem!—Sir, I most submissively implore your pardon for my transgression of ingratitude and omission; having my intire dependence, sir, upon the superfluity of your goodness, which, like an inundation, will, I hope, totally immerge the recollection of my error, and leave me floating in your sight, upon the full blown bladders of repentance—by the help of which, I shall once more hope to swim into your favour. [*Bonus.*]

*Sharp.* So-h, O, sir, I am easily pacify'd; the acknowledgment of a gentleman——

*Sir J.* Acknowledgment! Sir, I am all over acknowledgment, and will not stick to shew it in the greatest extremity, by night or by day, in sickness or in health, winter or summer; all seasons and occasions shall testify the reality and gratitude of your superabundant humble servant, sir Joseph Wittol, knight. Hem! hem!

*Sharp.* Sir Joseph Wittol!

*Sir J.* The same, sir, of Wittol-Hall, in Comitatu, Bucks.

*Sharp.* Is it possible! Then I am happy to have obliged the mirror of knighthood and pink of courtesy in the age. Let me embrace you.

*Sir J.* O lord, sir!

*Sharp.* My loss I esteem as a trifle repaid with interest, since it has purchas'd me the friendship and acquaintance of the person in the world whose character I admire.

*Sir J.* You are only pleased to say so, sir—But pray, if I may be so bold, what is that loss you mentioned?

*Sharp.* O, term it no longer so, sir. In the scuffle last night, I only dropt a bill of a hundred pound, which I confess, I came half despairing to recover; but thanks to my better fortune——

*Sir J.* You have found it, sir, then it seems; I profess I'm heartily glad——

*Sharp.* Sir, your humble servant—I don't question but you are; that you have so cheap an opportunity of expressing your gratitude and generosity. Since the paying so trivial a sum, will wholly acquit you and doubly engage me.

*Sir J.* What a dickens does he mean by a trivial sum?  
[*Aside.*] But han't you found it, sir?

*Sharp.* No otherwise, I vow to God, but in my hopes in you, sir.

*Sir J.* Humh.

*Sharp.* But that's sufficient—'T were injustice to doubt the honour of sir Joseph Wittol.

*Sir J.* O lord, sir!

*Sharp.* You are above, I'm sure, a thought so low, to suffer me to lose what was ventured in your service. Nay, 't was in a manner—paid down for your deliverance; 't was so much lent you—and you scorn, I'll say that for you——

*Sir J.* Nay, I'll say that for myself, with your leave, sir, I do scorn a dirty thing. But, agad, I'm a little out of pocket at present.

*Sharp.* 'Pshaw, you can't want a hundred pound. Your word is sufficient any where. 'T is but borrowing so much dirt, you have large acres, and can soon repay it—Money is but dirt, Sir Joseph—mere dirt.

*Sir J.* But I profess, 't is a dirt I have washed my hands of at present. I have laid it all out upon my back.

*Sharp.* Are you so extravagant in clothes, Sir Joseph?

*Sir J.* Ha, ha, ha, a very good jest, I profess; ha, ha, ha, a very good jest, and I did not know that I had said it, and that's a better jest than t' other. 'Tis a sign you and I ha'n't been long acquainted; you have lost a good jest for want of knowing me—I only mean a friend of mine, whom I call my back; he sticks as close to me, and follows me through all dangers—he is indeed back, breast, and headpiece, as it were, to me—agad, he's a brave fellow—Pauh, I am quite another thing, when I am with him. I do n't fear the devil, bless us, almost, if he be by. Ah—had he been with me last night—

*Sharp.* If he had, sir, what then? He could have done no more, nor perhaps have suffer'd so much—had he a hundred pound to lose? [Angrily.]

*Sir J.* O, lord, sir, by no means—but I might have saved a hundred pound. [*Aside.*] I meant innocently, as I hope to be saved, sir—a damned hot fellow. [*Aside.*] Only as I was saying, I let him have all my ready money to redeem his great sword from limbo—But, sir, I have a letter of credit to alderman Fondlewife, as far as two hundred pounds, and this afternoon you shall see I am a person, such a one as you would wish to have met with.——

*Sharp.* That you are, I'll be sworn. [*Aside.*] Why that's great, and like yourself.

*Enter Captain BLUFF.*

*Sir J.* O, here a' comes—Ay, my Hector of Troy! welcome, my bully, my back; agad, my heart has gone a pit-pat for thee.

*Bluff.* How now, my young knight! Not for fear, I hope; he that knows me, must be a stranger to fear.

*Sir J.* Nay, agad, I hate fear, ever since I had like to have died of a fright—But——



*Bluff.* But! Look you here, boy, here's your antidote, here's your Jesuit's powder for a shaking fit—But who hast thou got with thee, is he of mettle?

[*Laying his hand upon his sword.*]

*Sir J.* Ay, bully, a devilish smart fellow: a' will fight like a cock.

*Bluff.* Say you so? then I honour him—But has he been abroad? for every cock will fight upon his own dunghill.

*Sir J.* I do n't know, but I'll present you—

*Bluff.* I'll recommend myself—Sir, I honour you: I understand you love fighting; I reverence a man that loves fighting, sir, I kiss your hilts.

*Sharp.* Sir, your servant, but you are misinformed; for unless it be to serve my particular friend, as sir Joseph here, my country, or my religion, or in some very justifiable cause, I'm not for it.

*Bluff.* O lord, I beg your pardon, sir. I find you are not of my palate, you can't relish a dish of fighting, without sweet sauce. Now, I think—fighting for fighting sake's sufficient cause; fighting to me's religion and the laws.

*Sir J.* Ah, well said, my hero; was not that great, sir? By the lord Harry, he says true; fighting is meat, drink, and cloth to him. But, back, this gentleman is one of the best friends I have in the world, and saved my life last night—You know I told you.

*Bluff.* Ay! Then I honour him again—Sir, may I crave your name?

*Sharp.* Ah, sir, my name's Sharper.

*Sir J.* Pray, Mr. Sharper, embrace my back—Very well—by the lord Harry, Mr. Sharper, he's as brave as Cannibal. are not you, Bully-Back?

*Sharp.* Hannibal, I believe you mean, sir Joseph.

*Bluff.* Undoubtedly he did, sir; faith, Hannibal was a very pretty fellow—but, sir Joseph, comparisons are odious—Han-

nibal was a very pretty fellow in those days, it must be granted —But alas, sir! were he alive now, he would be nothing, nothing in the earth.

*Sharp.* How, sir! I make a doubt if there be at this day a greater general breathing.

*Bluff.* Oh, excuse me, sir; have you serv'd abroad, sir?

*Sharp.* Not I, really, sir!

*Bluff.* Oh, I thought so——Why, then you can know nothing, Sir; I am afraid you scarce know the history of the late war in Flanders, with all its particulars.

*Sharp.* Not I, sir, not more than public letters or gazettes tell us.

*Bluff.* Gazette! Why there again, now——Why, sir, there are not three words of truth, the year round, put into the Gazette——I'll tell you a strange thing, now, as to that——You must know, sir, I was resident in Flanders the last campaign; had a small post there; but no matter for that——Perhaps, sir, there was scarce any thing of moment done, but an humble servant of your's, that shall be nameless, was an eye-witness of—I won't say had the greatest share in't: though I might say that too, since I name nobody, you know——Well, Mr. Sharper, would you think it? In all this time——as I hope for a truncheon——this rascally Gazette-writer never so much as once mentioned me——Not once, by the wars!—Took no more notice, than as if Nol Bluff had not been in the land of the living.

*Sharp.* Strange!

*Sir J.* Yet, by the lord Harry, 'tis true, Mr. Sharper; for I went every day to coffee-houses to read the Gazette myself.

*Bluff.* Ay, ay, no matter——You see, Mr. Sharper, after all, I am content to retire—Live a private person—Scipio and others have done it.

*Sharp.* Impudent rogue!

[*Aside.*

*Sir J.* Ay, this damn'd modesty of yours——Agad, if he would put in for 't, he might be made general himself yet.

*Bluff.* O fy, no, sir Joseph——You know I hate this.

*Sir J.* Let me but tell Mr. Sharper a little, how you eat fire once out of the mouth of a cannon——agad he did; those impenetrable whiskers of his have confronted flames——

*Bluff.* Death, what do you mean, sir Joseph!

*Sir J.* Look you now, I tell you he's so modest he'll own nothing.

*Bluff.* Pish! you have put me out, I have forgot what I was about. Pray, hold your tongue, and give me leave. [*Angrily.*

*Sir J.* I am dumb.

*Bluff.* This sword, I think, I was telling you of, Mr. Sharper——This sword, I'll maintain to be the best divine, anatomist, lawyer, or casuist in Europe; it shall decide a controversy, or split a cause——

*Sir J.* Nay, now I must speak; it will split a hair; by the lord Harry, I have seen it.

*Bluff.* Zouns, sir, it's a lie, you have not seen it, nor sha n't see it; sir, I say you ca n't see; what d'ye say to that, now?

*Sir J.* I am blind.

*Bluff.* Death! had any other man interrupted me——

*Sir J.* Good Mr. Sharper, speak to him; I dare not look that way.

*Sharp.* Captain, sir Joseph's penitent.

*Bluff.* O, I am calm, sir, calm as a discharged culverin——But 't was indiscreet, when you know what will provoke me——Nay, come, sir Joseph, you know my heat's soon over.

*Sir J.* Well, I am a fool sometimes——But I'm sorry.

*Bluff.* Enough.

*Sir J.* Come, we'll go take a glass to drown animosities. Mr. Sharper, will you partake?

*Sharp.* I wait on you, sir; nay, pray, captain—you are  
sir Joseph's back. [Exeunt.]

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SCENE II.

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ARAMINTA'S Apartment. ARAMINTA and BELINDA, BETTY  
waiting.

*Belin.* Ah! nay, dear——pr'y thee good, dear, sweet  
cousin, no more. Oh, gad, I swear you 'd make one sick to  
hear you.

*Aram.* Bless me! what have I said to move you thus?

*Belin.* O you have raved, talked idly, and all in commend-  
ation of that filthy, awkward, two-legg'd creature, man——  
you do n't know what you've said, your fever has transported  
you.

*Aram.* If love be the fever which you mean, kind Heav'n  
avert the cure: let me have oil to feed that flame, and never let  
it be extinct, 'till I myself am ashes.

*Belin.* There was a whine!——O, gad, I hate your horrid  
fancy——this love is the devil; and sure to be in love, is to be  
possess'd——'T is in the head, the heart, the blood, the——all  
over——O, gad, you are quite spoil'd—I shall loath the sight  
of mankind for your sake.

*Aram.* Fy! this is gross affectation——A little of Bell-  
mour's company would change the scene.

*Belin.* Filthy fellow! I wonder, cousin——

*Aram.* I wonder, cousin, you should imagine I do n't per-  
ceive you love him.

*Belin.* Oh, I love your hedious fancy! Ha, ha, ha, love a  
man!

*Aram.* Love a man! yes, you would not love a beast.

*Belin.* Of all beasts, not an ass—which is so like your Vain-love—Lard, I have seen an ass look so chagrin, ha, ha, ha! (you must pardon me, I can't help laughing) that an absolute lover would have concluded the poor creature to have had darts, and flames, and altars, and all that, in his breast. Araminta, come, I'll talk seriously to you now; could you but see, with my eyes, the buffoonery of one scene of address, a lover, set out with all his equipage and appurtenances; O, gad! sure you would——But you play the game, and consequently can't see the mis-carriages obvious to every stander by.

*Aram.* Yes, yes, I can see something near it, when you and Bellmour meet. You don't know that you dreamt of Bellmour last night, and call'd him aloud in your sleep.

*Belin.* Pish! I can't help dreaming of the devil sometimes; would you from thence infer I love him?

*Aram.* But that's not all; you caught me in your arms when you named him, and press'd me to your bosom——Sure, if I had not pinch'd you till you wak'd, you had stifled me with kisses.

*Belin.* O barbarous aspersion!

*Aram.* No aspersion, cousin, we are alone—Nay I can tell you more.

*Belin.* I deny it all.

*Aram.* What, before you hear it?

*Belin.* My denial is premeditated, like your malice—Lard, cousin, you talk oddly—Whatever the matter is, o' my soul, I'm afraid you'll follow evil courses.

*Aram.* Ha, ha, ha! this is pleasant.

*Belin.* You may laugh, but——

*Aram.* Ha, ha, ha!

*Belin.* You think the malicious grin becomes you—The devil take Bellmour—Why do you tell me of him?



*Aram.* Oh, is it come out—now you are angry, I am sure you love him. I tell nobody else, cousin—I have not betray'd you yet.

*Belin.* Pr'y thee, tell it all the world; it's false.

*Aram.* Come, then, kiss and friends.

*Belin.* Pish.

*Aram.* Pr'ythee do 'nt be so peevish.

*Belin.* Pr'ythee do n't be so impertinent.—Betty

*Aram.* Ha, ha, ha!

*Betty.* Did your ladyship call, madam?

*Belin.* Get my hoods and tippet, and bid the footman call a chair. [Exit Betty.]

*Aram.* I hope you are not going out in dudgeon, cousin.

*Enter FOOTMAN.*

*Foot.* Madam, there are——

*Belin.* Is there a chair?

*Foot.* No, madam, there are Mr. Bellmour and Mr. Vainlove, to wait upon your ladyship.

*Aram.* Are they below?

*Foot.* No, madam, they sent before, to know if you were at home.

*Belin.* The visit's to you, cousin, I suppose I am at my liberty.

*Aram.* Be ready to shew 'em up. [Exit Foot.]

*Enter BETTY, with hoods and looking-glass.*

I can't tell, cousin, I believe we are equally concerned; but if you continue your humour, it wo n't be very entertaining—I know she'd fain be persuaded to stay. [Aside.]

*Belin.* I shall oblige you in leaving you to the full and free enjoyment of that conversation you admire. Let me see; hold the glass—Lard, I look wretchedly to-day!

*Aram.* Betty, why don't you help my cousin?

[*Putting on her hoods.*]

*Belin.* Hold off your fists, and see that he gets a chair with a high roof, or a very low seat—Stay, come back here, you Mrs. Fidget—you are so ready to go to the footman—Here, take 'em all again, my mind's chang'd, I won't go.

[*Exit Betty.*]

*Aram.* So, this I expected—You won't oblige me, then, cousin, and let me have all the company to myself.

*Belin.* No; upon deliberation, I have too much charity to trust you to yourself. The devil watches all opportunities; and in this favourable disposition of your mind, Heaven knows how far you may be tempted: I am tender of your reputation.

*Aram.* I am oblig'd to you—But who's malicious now, Belinda?

*Belin.* Not I; witness my heart, I stay out of pure affection.

*Aram.* In my conscience I believe you.

*Enter BELLMORE, VAINLOVE, and Footman.*

*Bell.* So, fortune be prais'd! To find you both within, ladies, is——

*Aram.* No miracle, I hope.

*Bell.* Not o' your side, madam, I confess—But my tyrant, there, and I, are two buckets that can never come together.

*Belin.* Nor are ever like—Yet we often meet, and clash.

*Bell.* How, never like! marry, Hymen forbid. But this is to run so extravagantly in debt; I have laid out such a world of love in your service, that you think you can never be able to pay me all; so shun me, for the same reason that you would a dun.

*Elin.* Ah, on my conscience, and the most impertinent and troublesome of duns——A dun for money will be quiet, when he sees his debtor has not wherewithal——But a dun for love is an eternal torment, that never rests——

*Bell.* 'Till he has created love where there was none, and then gets it for his pains. For importunity in love, like importunity at court, first creates its own interest, and then pursues it for the favour.

*Aram.* Favours that are got by impudence and importunity, are like discoveries from the rack, when the afflicted person, for his ease, sometimes confesses secrets his heart knows nothing of.

*Vain.* I should rather think, favours, so gain'd, to be due rewards to indefatigable devotion——For as love is a deity, he must be serv'd by prayer.

*Belin.* O gad, would you would all pray to Love, then, and let us alone.

*Vain.* You are the temples of Love, and 't is through you our devotion must be convey'd.

*Aram.* Rather, poor silly idols of your own making, which, upon the least displeasure, you forsake, and set up new——Every man, now, changes his mistress and his religion, as his humour varies, or his interest.

*Vain.* O madam——

*Aram.* Nay, come, I find we are growing serious, and then we are in great danger of being dull——“ If my musick-master be not gone, I'll entertain you with a new song, which  
“ comes pretty near my own opinion of love, and your sex—  
“ Who's there? Is Mr. Gavot gone? [Calls.

“ *Foot.* Only to the next door, madam; I'll call him.

“ [Exit.]”

*Bell.* Why, you won't hear me with patience.

*Aram.* What's the matter, cousin?

*Bell.* Nothing, madam, only——

*Belin.* Pr'y thee hold thy tongue——Lard, he has so pester'd me with flames and stuff——I think I sha n't endure the sight of a fire this twelvemonth.

*Bell.* Yet all can't melt that cruel, frozen heart.

“*Belin.* O gad, I hate your hideous fancy”——you said that once before——if you must talk impertinently, for Heaven's sake, let it be with variety; do n't come always, like the devil, wrapt in flames—I'll not hear a sentence more, that begins with an, I burn—or an, I beseech you, madam.

*Bell.* But tell me how you would be ador'd—I am very tractable.

*Belin.* Then, know, I would be ador'd in silence.

*Bell.* Humph, I thought so, that you might have all the talk to yourself—You had better let me speak; for if my thoughts fly to any pitch, I shall make villanous signs.

*Belin.* What will you get by that? to make such signs as I won't understand.

*Bell.* Ay, but if I'm tongue-ty'd, I must have all my actions free, to——quicken your apprehension——and, I gad, let me tell you, my most prevailing argument is express'd in dumb-shew.

“*Enter Musick-master.*”

“*Aram.* O, I am glad we shall have a song to divert the discourse——Pray oblige us with the last new song.”

“ S O N G.

I.

“*Thus to a ripe, consenting maid,*

“*Poor, old, repenting Delia said,*

" *Would you long preserve your lover?*

" *Would you still his goddess reign?*

" *Never let him all discover,*

" *Never let him much obtain.*

## II.

" *Men will admire, adore and die,*

" *While wishing at your feet they lie:*

" *But admitting their embraces,*

" *Wakes 'em from the golden dream;*

" *Nothing new besides our faces,*

" *Every woman is the same.*

" *Aram.* So, how d'ye like the song, gentlemen?

" *Bell.* O, very well perform'd—but I don't much admire the words.

" *Aram.* I expected it—there's too much truth in 'em; if Mr. Gavot will walk with us in the garden, we'll have it once again—you may like it better at second hearing. You'll bring my cousin.

\* *Aram.* If you'll walk into the next room, I'll entertain you with a song, to divert the discourse—You'll bring my cousin.

*Bell.* Faith, madam, I dare not speak to her; but I'll make signs. [Addresses Belinda in dumb show.]

*Belin.* Oh, foh! your dumb rhetorick is more ridiculous than your talking impertinence; "as an ape is a much more troublesome animal than a parrot.

" *Aram.* Ay, cousin, and 't is a sign the creatures mimick nature well; for there are few men but do more silly things than they say.

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\* This speech is inserted, on account of the song, &c. being omitted in the representation.



" *Bell.* Well," I find my apishness has paid the ransom for my speech, and set it at liberty——though, I confess, I could be well enough pleas'd to drive on a love bargain, in that silent manner——'t would save a man a world of lying and swearing at the year's end. Besides, I have had a little experience, that brings to mind——

*When wit and reason both have fail'd to move ;  
Kind looks and actions (from success) do prove,  
Ev'n silence may be eloquent in love.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

*The Street.* SILVIA and LUCY.

*Silvia.*

WILL he not come, then?

*Lucy.* Yes, yes, come, I warrant him, if you will go in, and be ready to receive him.

" *Silv.* Why did you not tell me?"——Whom mean you?

*Lucy.* Whom you should mean, Heartwell.

*Silv.* Senseless creature, I meant my Vainlove.

*Lucy.* You may as soon hope to recover your own maiden-head as his love. Therefore, e'en set your heart at rest; and in the name of opportunity mind your own business. Strike, Heartwell, home, before the bait's worn off the hook. Age will come. He nibbled fairly yesterday, and, no doubt, will be eager enough to-day to swallow the temptation.

*Silv.* Well, since there's no remedy——Yet tell me—for I would know, though to the anguish of my soul; how did he refuse? Tell me——how did he receive my letter, in anger or in scorn?

*Lucy.* Neither; but what was ten times worse, with damn'd senseless indifference. By this light I could have spit in his face—Receive it! Why he received it as I would one of your lovers that should come empty-handed; as a court lord does his mercer's bill, or a begging dedication—he received it, as if 't had been a letter from his wife.

*Silv.* What! did he not read it?

*Lucy.* Humm'd it over, gave you his respects, and said, he would take time to peruse it—but then he was in haste.

*Silv.* Respects, and peruse it! He's gone, and Araminta has bewitch'd him from me—Oh, how the name of rival fires my blood—"I could curse 'em both;" eternal jealousy attend her love, and disappointment meet his. "Oh, that I could re-venge the torment he has caus'd—Methinks, I feel the woman strong within me, and vengeance kindles in the room of love."

*Lucy.* I have that in my head may make mischief.

*Silv.* How, dear Lucy?

*Lucy.* You know Araminta's dissembled coyness has won, and keeps him hers—

*Silv.* Could we persuade him, that she loves another—

*Lucy.* No, you're out; could we persuade him, that she dotes on him, himself—Contrive a kind letter as from her, 'twould disgust his nicety, and take away his stomach.

*Silv.* Impossible! 't will never take.

*Lucy.* Trouble not your head. Let me alone—I will inform myself of what past between 'em to-day, and about it straight—Hold, I'm mistaken, or that's Heartwell, who stands talking at the corner—'t is he—go get you in, madam, receive him pleasantly, dress up your face in innocence and smiles, and dissemble the very want of dissimulation—You know what will take him.

*Silv.* 'Tis as hard to counterfeit love, as it is to conceal it: but I'll do my weak endeavour, though I fear I have no art.

*Lucy.* Hang art, madam, and trust to nature for dissembling.

*Man, was by nature, woman's creature made.*

*We never are but by ourselves betray'd.* [Exeunt.

*Enter HEARTWELL, VAINLOVE and BELLMOUR following.*

*Bell.* Hist, hist, is not that Heartwell going to Silvia?

*Vain.* He's talking to himself, I think; pr'y thee let's try if we can hear him.

*Heart.* Why, whither, in the devil's name, am I a going now? Hum!—let me think—Is not this Silvia's house, the cave of that enchantress, and which consequently I ought to shun as I would infection? To enter here, is to put on the envenom'd shirt, to run into the embraces of a fever, and in some raving fit, be led to plunge myself into that more consuming fire, a woman's arms. Ha! well recollected, I will recover my reason, and be gone.

*Bell.* Now Venus forbid!

*Vain.* Hush——

*Heart.* Well, why do you not move? Feet, do your office—Not one inch; ho, foregad, I'm caught—There stands my north, and thither my needle points—Now could I curse myself, yet cannot repent. O thou delicious, damn'd, dear, destructive woman! 'Sdeath, how the young fellows will hoot me! I shall be the jest of the town; nay, in two days, I expect to be chronicled in ditty, and sung in woeful ballad, to the tune of the superannuated maiden's comfort, or the batchelor's fall; and upon the third, I shall be hang'd in effigy, pasted up for the exemplary ornament of "necessary houses and" cobbler's stalls—Death, I can't think on't—I'll run into the danger to lose the apprehension. [Exit.

*Bell.* A very certain remedy, *probatum est*—Ha, ha, ha, poor George, thou art i'th' right, thou hast sold thyself to laughter;

the ill-natured town will find the jest just where thou hast lost it. Ha, ha, how a' struggled, like an old lawyer between two fees.

*Vain.* Or a young wench, between pleasure and reputation.

*Bell.* Or, as you did to-day, when, half afraid, you snatch'd a kiss from Araminta?

*Vain.* She has made a quarrel on 't.

*Bell.* Pauh. women are only angry at such offences, to have the pleasure of forgiving 'em.

*Vain.* And I love to have the pleasure of making my peace  
—— I should not esteem a pardon, if too easily won.

*Bell.* Thou dost not know what thou would'st be at; whether thou would'st have her angry or pleas'd. Could'st thou be content to marry Araminta?

*Vain.* Could you be content to go to Heaven?

*Bell.* Hum, not immediately, in my conscience, not heartily? I'd do a little more good in my generation first, in order to deserve it.

*Vain.* Nor I to marry Araminta, 'till I merit her.

*Bell.* But how the devil dost thou expect to get her, if she never yield?

*Vain.* That's true; but I would——

*Bell.* Marry her without her consent. Thou 'rt a riddle beyond woman——

*Enter SETTER.*

Trusty Setter, what tidings? How goes the project?

*Setter.* As all wicked projects do, sir, "where the devil prevails our endearments" with success.

*Bell.* A good hearing, Setter.

*Vain.* Well, I'll leave you with your engineer.

*Bell.* And hast thou provided necessaries?

*Setter.* All, all, sir. The large sanctified hat, and the little precise band, with a swinging long spiritual cloak, to cover carnal knavery—not forgetting the black patch, which Tribulation Spintext wears, as I'm informed, upon one eye, as a penal mourning for the ogling offences of his youth; and some say, with that eye, he first discovered the frailty of his wife.

*Bell.* Well, in this fanatic father's habit, will I confess Lætitia.

*Setter.* Rather prepare her for confession, sir, by helping her to sin.

*Bell.* Be at your master's lodging in the evening, I shall use the robes. [*Exeunt Bell. and Vain.*]

*Setter.* I shall, sir—I wonder to which of these two gentlemen I do most properly appertain—the one uses me as his attendant; the other, being the better acquainted with my parts, employs me as a pimp. Why, that's much the more honourable employment—by all means—I follow one as my master, t'other follows me as his conductor.

*Enter Lucy.*

*Lucy.* There's that hang-dog, his man—I had a power over him in the reign of my mistress; but he is too true a valet de chambre not to affect his master's faults; and consequently is revolted from his allegiance.

*Setter.* Undoubtedly, 't is impossible to be a pimp and not a man of parts; that is, without being politic, diligent, secret, wary, and so forth—And to all this valiant as Hercules—that is, passively valiant and actively obedient. Ah! Setter, what a treasure is here lost for want of being known?

*Lucy.* Here's some villany a-foot, he's so thoughtful; may be I may discover something in my mask—Worthy sir, a word with you. [*Puts on her mask.*]

*Setter.* Why, if I were known, I might come to be a great man——



*Lucy.* Not to interrupt your meditation——

*Setter.* And I should not be the first that has procured his greatness by pimping.

*Lucy.* Now, poverty and the pox light upon thee for a contemplative pimp.

*Setter.* Ha! what art, who thus maliciously hast awakened me from my dream of glory? Speak, thou vile disturber——

*Lucy.* Of thy most vile cogitations——thou poor conceited wretch, how wert thou valuing thyself, upon thy master's employment? For he's the head pimp to Mr. Bellmour.

*Setter.* Good words, damsel, or I shall——But: how dost thou know my master or me?

*Lucy.* Yes, I know both master and man to be——

*Setter.* To be men perhaps; nay, 'faith, like enough; I often march in the rear of my master, and enter the breaches which he has made.

*Lucy.* Ay, the breach of faith, which he has begun. Thou traitor to thy lawful princess.

*Setter.* Why, how now! pr'ythee who art? Lay by that worldly face, and produce your natural vizor.

*Lucy.* No, sirrah, I'll keep it on to abuse thee, and leave thee without hopes of revenge.

*Setter.* Oh! I begin to smoke ye. Thou art some forsaken Abigail, we have dallied with thee heretofore—and art come to tickle thy imagination with remembrance of iniquity past.

*Lucy.* No, thou pitiful flatterer of thy master's imperfections; thou maukin, made of the shreds and parings of his superfluous fopperies.

*Setter.* Thou art thy mistress's soul self, composed of her unsullied iniquities and clothing.

*Lucy.* Hang thee—beggar's cur—Thy master is but a mumper in love, lies canting at the gate; but never dares presume to enter the house.

*Setter.* Thou art the wicket to thy mistress's gate, to be opened to all comers. In fine thou art the high road to thy mistress.

*Lucy.* Beast, filthy toad, I can hold no longer, look and tremble.

[Unmasks.]

*Setter.* How, Mrs. Lucy!

*Lucy.* I wonder thou hast the impudence to look me in the face.

*Setter.* Adsbud, who is in fault, mistress of mine? Who flung the first stone? Who undervalued my function? And who the devil could know you by instinct?

*Lucy.* You could know my office by instinct, and be hanged, which you have slandered most abominably. It vexes me not what you have said of my person; but that my innocent calling should be exposed and scandaliz'd—I cannot bear it.

*Setter.* Nay, faith, Lucy, I'm sorry; I'll own myself to blame, though we were both in fault as to our offices—Come, I'll make you any reparation.

*Lucy.* Swear.

*Setter.* I do swear to the utmost of my power.

*Lucy.* To be brief then, what is the reason your master did not appear to-day, according to the summons I brought him?

*Setter.* To answer you as briefly—He has a cause to be tried in another court.

*Lucy.* Come, tell me in plain terms, how forward he is with Araminta.

*Setter.* Too forward to be turned back—Though he's a little in disgrace at present about a kiss which he forced. You and I can kiss, Lucy, without all that.

*Lucy.* Stand off—He's a precious jewel.

*Setter.* And therefore you'd have him to set in your lady's locket.

*Lucy.* Where is he now?

*Setter.* He 'll be in the piazza presently.

*Lucy.* Remember to-day's behaviour—Let me see you with a penitent face.

*Setter.* What no token of amity, Lucy? You and I do n't use to part with dry lips.

*Lucy.* No, no, avaunt—I 'll not be slabber'd and kiss'd now—I 'm not i' th' humour.

*Setter.* I 'll not quit you so—I 'll follow and put you in the humour. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter Sir JOSEPH WITTOL and BLUFF.*

*Bluff.* And so out of your unwonted generosity——

*Sir J.* And good-nature, back; I am good natur'd and I can't help it.

*Bluff.* You have given him a note upon Fondlewife for a hundred pound.

*Sir J.* Ay, ay, poor fellow, he ventur'd fair for 't.

*Bluff.* You have disoblged me in it—for I have occasion for the money, and if you would look me in the face again and live, go, and force him to re-deliver you the note—go—and bring it me hither. I 'll stay here for you.

*Sir J.* You may stay till the day of judgment then, by the lord Harry. I know better things too than to be run through the guts for a hundred pound. Why, I gave that hundred pound for being saved, an d'ye think, an there were no danger, I 'll be so ungrateful to take it from the gentleman again?

*Bluff.* Well, go to him from me—Tell him, I say, he must refund—or bilbo's the word, and slaughter will ensue—if he refuse, tell him—but whisper that—tell him—I 'll pink his soul—but whisper that softly to him.

*Sir J.* So softly, that he shall never hear on 't, I warrant you—Why, what a devil's the matter, bully, are you mad? Or d'ye think I 'm mad? Agad, for my part, I don't love to be

he messenger of ill news; 't is an ungrateful office——so tell him yourself.

*Bluff.* By these hilts, I believe he frightened you into this composition. I believe you gave it him out of fear, pure paltry fear—Confess.

*Sir J.* No, no, hang 't, I was not afraid, neither—though I confess he did in a manner snap me up—yet I can't say that it was altogether out of fear, but partly to prevent mischief—for he was a devilish choleric fellow. And if my cholar had been up too, agad, there would have been mischief done, that's flat. And yet, I believe, if you had been by, I would as soon have let him a' had a hundred of my teeth. Adshart, if he should come now, just when I'm angry, I'd tell him——Mum.

*Enter BELLNOUR and SHARPER.*

*Bell.* Thou'rt a lucky rogue; there's your benefactor, you ought to return him thanks, now you have received the favour.

*Sharp.* Sir Joseph—Your note was accepted, and the money paid at sight. I'm come to return my thanks.

*Sir J.* They won't be accepted so readily as the bill, sir.

*Bell.* I doubt the knight repents, Tom—He looks like the knight of the sorrowful face.

*Sharp.* This is a double generosity—Do me a kindness, and refuse my thanks—But I hope you are not offended, that I offered them, without any offence to you, sir.

*Sir J.* May be I am, sir; may be I am not, sir—may be I am both, sir.—What then? I hope I may be offended.

*Sharp.* Hey-day! Captain, what's the matter? You can tell.

*Bluff.* Mr. Sharper, the matter is plain——Sir Joseph has found out your trick, and does not care to be put upon, being a man of honour.

*Sharp.* Trick, sir!

*Sir J.* Ay, trick, sir, and won't be put upon, sir, being a man of honour, sir; and so, sir——

*Sharp.* Hearn 'e, Sir Joseph, a word with ye—in consideration of some favours lately received, I would not have you draw yourself into a premunire, by trusting to that sign of a man there—that pop-gun charged with wind.

*Sir J.* O lord, O lord, Captain come justify yourself—I'll give him the lie, if you'll stand to it.

*Sharp.* Nay, then I'll be beforehand with you, take that—  
Oafe. [Cuffs him.]

*Sir J.* Captain, will you see this? Wou't you pink his soul?

*Bluff.* Hush, 't is not so convenient now—I shall find a time.

*Sharp.* What, do you mutter about a time, rascal—You were the incendiary—There's to put you in mind of your time—  
A memorandum. [Kicks him.]

*Bluff.* Oh, this is your time, sir, you had best make use on 't.

*Sharp.* I gad, and so I will. There's again for you.

[Kicks him.]

*Bluff.* You are obliging, sir, but this is too public a place to thank you in: but in your ear—You are to be seen again.

*Sharp.* Ay, thou inimitable coward, and to be felt—as for example. [Kicks him.]

*Bell.* Ha, ha, ha, pr'ythee come away; 't is scandalous to kick this puppy, unless a man were cold, and had no other way to get himself a heat. [Exeunt Bell. and Sharp.]

*Bluff.* Very well—very fine—But 't is no matter—Is not this fine, Sir Joseph?

*Sir J.* Indifferent, agad, in my opinion very indifferent—I'd rather go plain all my life, than wear such finery.

*Bluff.* Death and hell, to be affronted thus! I'll die before I'll suffer it. [Draws.]



*Sir J.* O lord, his anger was not raised before—Nay, dear captain, do n't be in a passion now he's gone—Put up, put up, dear back, 't is your Sir Joseph begs. Come, let me kiss thee. So, so, put up, put up.

*Bluff.* By heav'n, 't is not to be put up.

*Sir J.* What, bully?

*Bluff.* The affront.

*Sir J.* No, agad, no more 't is, for that's put up already, thy sword I mean.

*Bluff.* Well, Sir Joseph, at your intreaty—But were not you, my friend, abus'd, and cuff'd, and kick'd?

[*Putting up his sword.*]

*Sir J.* Ay, ay, so were you too; no matter, 't is past.

*Bluff.* By the immortal thunder of great guns, 't is false—he sucks not vital air who dares affirm it to this face. [*Looks big.*]

*Sir J.* To that face, I grant you, captain—No, no, I grant you—Not to that face, by the lord Harry.—If you had put on your fighting face before, you had done his business—he durst as soon have kiss'd you, as kick'd you to your face—But a man can no more help what's done behind his back, than what's said.—Come, we'll think no more of what's past.

*Bluff.* I'll call a council of war within to consider of my revenge to come.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

*Silvia's Apartments. Enter HEARTWELL and SILVIA.*

SONG.

*As Amoret and Thyrsis lay  
Melting the hours in gentle play;  
Joining faces, mingling kisses,  
And exchanging harmless blisses.*

*He trembling cry'd, with eager haste,  
O let me feed as well as taste,  
I die, if I'm not wholly blest.*

*After the song, a dance of anticks.*

*Silv.* Indeed, it is very fine——I could look upon 'em all day.

*Heart.* Well, has this prevail'd for me, and will you look upon me?

*Silv.* If you could sing and dance so, I should love to look upon you too.

*Heart.* Why, 't was I sung and danc'd; I gave music to the voice, and life to their measures——Look you here, Silvia. [*Pulling out a purse and chinking it.*] Here are songs and dances, poetry and music—hark! how sweetly one guinea rhymes to another—and how they dance to the music of their own chink. This buys all t' other—and this thou shalt have; this, and all that I am worth for the purchase of thy love. Say, is it mine then, ha? Speak, siren——Oons, why do I look on her! Yet I must—Speak, dear angel, devil, saint, witch; do not rack me with suspense.

*Silv.* Nay, don't stare at me so——You make me blush——I cannot look.

*Heart.* Oh, manhood, where art thou! What am I come to? A woman's toy, at these years! Death, a bearded baby for a girl to dandle. “O, dotage, dotage! That ever that noble passion, lust, should ebb to this degree—No reflux of vigorous blood; but milky love supplies the empty channels, and prompts me to the softness of a child—a mere infant, and would suck,” Can you love me, Silvia? Speak.

*Silv.* I dare not speak 'till I believe you, and indeed I'm afraid to believe you yet.

*Heart.* Death! how her innocence torments and pleases me! Lying, child, is indeed the art of love; and men are generally masters in it: but I'm so newly entered, you cannot distrust me of any skill in the treacherous mystery—Now, by my soul, I cannot lie, though it were to serve a friend or gain a mistress.

*Silv.* Must you lie then, if you say you love me?

*Heart.* No, no, dear ignorance, thou beauteous changeling—I tell thee, I do love thee, and tell it for a truth, a naked truth, which I'm ashamed to discover.

*Silv.* But love, they say, is a tender thing, “that will smooth frowns, and make calm an angry face; will soften a rugged temper, and make ill-humoured people good.” You look ready to fright one, and talk as if your passion were not love, but anger.

*Heart.* 'Tis both; for I am angry with myself, when I am pleased with you—And a pox upon me for loving thee so well—“yet I must on—” 'Tis a bearded arrow, and will more easily be thrust forward than drawn back.”

*Silv.* Indeed, if I were well assur'd you lov'd; but how can I be well assur'd?

*Heart.* Take the symptoms—and ask all the tyrants of thy sex, if their fools are not known by this party-coloured livery—I am melancholic, when thou art absent; look like an ass, when thou art present; wake for thee, when I should sleep; and even dream of thee, when I am awake; sigh much, drink little, eat less, court solitude, am grown very entertaining to myself, and, as I am informed, very troublesome to every body else. If this be not love, it is madness, and then it is pardonable—Nay, yet a more certain sign than all this; I give thee my money.

*Silv.* Ay, but that is no sign; for they say, gentlemen will give money to any naughty woman to come “to bed” to them

—O, Gemini, I hope you don't mean so—for I won't be a whore.

*Heart.* The more is the pity.

[*Aside.*

*Silv.* Nay, if you would marry me, you should not come to "bed to" me—"you have such a beard, and would so prickle one." But do you intend to marry me?

*Heart.* That a fool should ask such a malicious question! Death! I shall be drawn in, before I know where I am—However, I find I am pretty sure of her consent, if I am put to it. [*Aside.*] Marry you? No, no, I'll love you.

*Silv.* Nay, but if you love me, you must marry me; what, don't I know my father lov'd my mother, and was marry'd to her?

*Heart.* Ay, ay, in old days people marry'd where they lov'd; but that fashion is chang'd, child.

"*Silv.* Never tell me that: I know 'tis not chang'd by myself; for I love you, and would marry you.

"*Heart.* I'll have my beard shav'd, it shan't hurt thee, and "we'll go to bed."

*Silv.* No, no, I'm not such a fool neither, but I can keep myself honest.—Here, I won't keep any thing that's yours, I hate you now, [*Throwing the purse.*] and I'll never see you again, 'cause you'd have me naught.

[*Going.*

*Heart.* Damn her, let her go, and a good riddance—Yet so much tenderness and beauty—and honesty together is a jewel. Stay, Silvia—But then to marry—Why every man plays the fool once in his life; but to marry is playing the fool all one's life long.

*Silv.* What did you call me for?

*Heart.* I'll give thee all I have. And thou shalt live with me in every thing so like my wife, the world shall believe it: nay, thou shalt think so thyself—Only let me not think so.

*Silv.* No, I'll die before I'll be your whore——as well as I love you.

*Heart.* [*Aside.*] A woman, and ignorant, may be honest, when 't is out of obstinacy and contradiction—But, 's death, it is but a may-be, and upon scurvy terms—Well, farewell then——if I can get out of sight, I may get the better of myself.

*Silv.* Well——good bye.

[*Turns and weeps.*]

*Heart.* Ha! Nay, come, we'll kiss at parting. [*Kisses her.*] By Heav'n her kiss is sweeter than liberty—I will marry thee——There thou hast don't. All my resolves melted in that kiss——One more.

*Silv.* But when?

*Heart.* I'm impatient 'till it be done; I will not give myself liberty to think, lest I should cool—I will about a licence straight——in the evening expect me——One kiss more to confirm me mad; so.

[*Exit Heart.*]

*Silv.* Ha, ha, ha, an old fox trap'd——

*Enter LUCY.*

Bless me! you frightened me, I thought he had been come again, and had heard me.

“*Lucy.* Lord, madam, I met your lover in as much haste, as if he had been going for a midwife.

“*Silv.* He's going for a parson, girl, the forerunner of a midwife, some nine months hence——Well, I find dissimbling to our sex is as natural as swimming to a negro. We may depend upon our skill to save us at a plunge, though till then we never make the experiment.”——But how hast thou succeeded?

*Lucy.* As you would wish——since there is no reclaiming Vainlove; I have found out a pique she has taken at him; and have fram'd a letter that makes her sue for reconciliation first. I



know that will do—walk in and I'll shew it you. Come, madam, you're like to have a happy time on't, both your love and anger satisfied!—All that can charm our sex conspire to please you.

*That woman sure enjoys a blessed night,  
Whom love and vengeance both, at once delight.*

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ACT IV. SCENE I.

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*The Street. Enter BELLMOUR, in Fanatick Habit, and SETTER.*

*Bellmour.*

'Tis pretty near the hour. [*Looking on his watch.*] Well, and how, Setter, ha, does my hypocrisy fit me, ha? Does it sit easy on me?

*Setter.* O, most religiously well, sir.

*Bell.* I wonder why all our young fellows should glory in  
“an opinion of atheism; when they may be so much more conveniently lewd under the coverlet of religion.

*Setter.* 'Sbud, sir, away quickly, there's Fondlewife just turn'd the corner, and 's coming this way.

*Bell.* Gads so, there he is, he must not see me.

*Enter FONDLEWIFE and BARNABY.*

*Fond.* I say, I will tarry at home.

*Bar.* But, sir.

*Fond.* Good lack! I profess the spirit of contradiction hath possess'd the lad—I say, I will tarry at home, varlet.

*Bar.* I have done, sir, then farewell five hundred pounds.

*Fond.* Ha, how's that? Stay, stay, did you leave word, say you, with his wife? With Comfort herself.

*Bar.* I did; and Comfort will send Tribulation hither as soon as ever he comes home—I could have brought young Mr. Prig, to have kept my mistress company in the mean time; but you say——

*Fond.* How, how, say varlet! I say let him not come near my doors, I say he is a wanton young Levite, and pampereth himself up with dainties, that he may look lovely in the eyes of women——Sincerely, I am afraid, he hath already defiled the tabernacle of our sister Comfort; while her good husband is deluded by his godly appearance——I say, that even lust doth sparkle in his eyes, and glow upon his cheeks, and that I would as soon trust my wife with a lord's high-fed chaplain.

*Bar.* Sir, the hour draws nigh——and nothing will be done there 'till you come.

*Fond.* And nothing can be done here 'till I go—So that I'll tarry, d'ye see.

*Bar.* And run the hazard to lose your affair, Sir!

*Fond.* Good lack, good lack—I profess it is a sufficient vexation, for a man to have a handsome wife.

*Bar.* Never, sir, but when the man is an insufficient husband, 'Tis then, indeed, like the vanity of taking a fine house, and yet be forc'd to let lodgings, to help to pay the rent.

*Fond.* I profess, a very apt comparison, varlet. Go, and bid my Cocky come out to me; I will give her some instructions; I will reason with her before I go. [*Exit Bar.*] And in the mean time, I will reason with myself—Tell me, Isaac, why art thee jealous; why art thee distrustful of the wife of thy bosom?—Because she is young and vigorous, and I am old and impotent——Then, why didst thee marry, Isaac?——Because she was beautiful and tempting, and because I was obstinate and doating; “so that my inclination was, and is still, greater than “my power”——And will not that which tempted thee, also tempt others, who will tempt her, Isaac?——I fear it much

——But does not thy wife love thee, nay, doat upon thee?——  
Yes——Why, then! Ay, but to say truth, she's fonder of me,  
than she has reason to be; and in the way of trade, we still sus-  
pect the smoothest dealers of the deepest designs——And that  
she has some designs deeper than thou canst reach, th' hast ex-  
perimented, Isaac——But mum.

*Enter LETITIA.*

*Let.* I hope my dearest jewel is not going to leave me——  
are you, Nykin?

*Fond.* Wife——Have you thoroughly considered how de-  
testable, how heinous, and how crying a sin, the sin of adultery  
is? Have you weigh'd it, I say?

*Let.* Bless me, what means my dear!

*Fond.* [*Aside.*] I profess she has an alluring eye; I am doubt-  
ful whether I shall trust her, even with Tribulation himself——  
Speak, I say, have you considered what it is to cuckold your  
husband?

*Let.* [*Aside.*] I'm amaz'd: sure he has discovered nothing  
——Who has wrong'd me to my dearest? I hope my jewel does  
not think, that ever I had any such thing in my head, or ever  
will have.

*Fond.* No, no, I tell you I shall have it in my head.

*Let.* [*Aside.*] I know not what to think. But I'm resolved  
to find the meaning of it——Unkind dear! Was it for this you  
sent to call me? Is it not affliction enough that you are to leave  
me, but you must study to encrease it by unjust suspicions?  
[*Crying.*] Well—well—you know my fondness, and you love  
to tyrannize—Go on, cruel man, do; triumph over my poor  
heart, while it holds, which cannot be long, with this usage of  
yours——But that's what you want——Well, you will have  
your ends soon——You will—You will—Yes, it will break to  
oblige you. [*Sighs.*]

*Fond.* Verily, I fear I have carried the jest too far.—Nay, look you, now, if she does not weep—'t is the fondest fool—Nay, Cocky, Cocky—nay, dear Cocky, do n't cry, I was but in jest, I was not, ifeck.

*Læt.* [*Aside.*] O, then, all's safe. I was terribly frightened—My affliction is always your jest, barbarous man! Oh, that I should love to this degree! yet——

*Fond.* Nay, Cocky.

*Læt.* No, no you are weary of me, that's it—that's all, you would get another wife—another fond fool, to break her heart—Well, be as cruel as you can to me, I'll pray for you; and when I am dead with grief, may you have one that will love you as well as I have done: I shall be contented to lie at peace in my cold grave—since it will please you. [*Sighs.*]

*Fond.* Good lack, good lack, she would melt a heart of oak—I profess I can hold no longer—Nay, dear Cocky—Ifeck you'll break my heart—Ifeck you will—See, you have made me weep—made poor Nykin weep—Nay, come kiss, buss poor Nykin—and I won't leave thee—I'll lose all first.

*Læt.* [*Aside.*] How! Heaven forbid! that will be carrying the jest too far, indeed.

*Fond.* Won't you kiss Nykin?

*Læt.* Go, naughty Nykin, you don't love me.

*Fond.* Kiss, kiss, ifeck I do.

*Læt.* No, you don't.

[*She kisses him.*]

*Fond.* What, not love Cocky?

*Læt.* No——h.

[*Sighs.*]

*Fond.* I profess I do love thee better than five hundred pounds—and so thou shalt say, for I'll leave it to stay with thee.

*Læt.* No, you sha'n't neglect your business for me—No, indeed you sant, Nykin—If you do n't go, I'll think you been dealous of me still.

*Fond.* He, he, he, wilt thou, poor fool? Then, I will go; I won't be dealous——Poor Cocky, kiss Nykin, kiss Nykin; ee, ee, ee—Here will be the good man anon, to talk to Cocky, and teach her how a wife ought to behave herself.

*Læt.* [*Aside.*] I hope to have one that will shew me how a husband ought to behave himself——I shall be glad to learn to please my jewel. [*Kiss.*]

*Fond.* That's my good dear——Come, kiss Nykin once more, and then get you in——So——Get you in, get you in. By, by.

*Læt.* By, Nykin.

*Fond.* By, Cocky.

*Læt.* By, Nykin.

*Fond.* By, Cocky, by, by.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter VAINLOVE and SHARPER.*

*Sharp.* How! Araminta lost!

*Vain.* To confirm what I have said, read this——

[*Gives a letter.*]

*Sharp.* [*Reads.*] 'Hum, hum—And what then appear'd a fault, upon reflection, seems only an effect of a too powerful passion. I'm afraid I give too great a proof of my own at this time—I am in disorder for what I have written. But something, I know not what, forc'd me. I only beg a favourable censure of this, and am your  
Araminta.'

*Sharp.* Lost! Pray Heaven thou hast not lost thy wits. Here, here, she's thy own, man, sign'd and seal'd, too—To her, man—a delicious melon, pure, and consenting ripe, and only waits thy cutting up——She has been breeding love to thee all this while, and just now she's deliver'd of it.

*Vain.* 'Tis an untimely fruit, and she has miscarried of her love.



*Sharp.* Never leave this damn'd, ill-natur'd whimsy, Frank? Thou hast a sickly, peevish appetite: only chews love, and cannot digest it.

*Vain.* Yes, when I feed myself——But I hate to be cramm'd——By Heav'n, there's not a woman will give a man the pleasure of a chace: "my sport is always balk'd, or cut short. "I stumble over the game I would pursue"——'Tis dull and unnatural to have a hare run full in the hounds' mouth; and would distaste the keenest hunter——I would have overtaken, not have met my game.

*Sharp.* However, I hope you don't mean to forsake it; that will be but a kind of mongrel cur's trick. Well, are you for the Mall?

*Vain.* No, she will be there this evening——Yes, I will go too——and she shall see her error in——

*Sharp.* In her choice, I gad——But thou can'st not be so great a brute as to slight her?

*Vain.* "I should disappoint her if I did not"——By her management, I should think she expects it.

*All naturally fly what does pursue:*

*'Tis fit men should be coy, when women woo.*

SCENE II.

*A Room in Fondlewife's house. A Servant introducing BELL-MOUR in a fanatic habit, with a patch upon one eye, and a book in his hand.*

*Serv.* Here's a chair, sir, if you please to repose yourself. My mistress is coming, sir. [Exit.]

*Bell.* Secure in my disguise, I have out-fac'd suspicion, and ev'n dar'd discovery——This cloak my sanctity, and trusty Scarron's novels my prayer-book——Methinks I am the very picture of Montufar, in the Hypocrites——Oh, she comes.

*Enter LÆTITIA.*

*So breaks Aurora through the veil of night,  
Thus fly the clouds, divided by her light,  
And ev'ry eye receives a new-born sight.*

[Throwing off his cloak, patch, &c.

*Læt.* Thus strew'd with blushes, like——Ah! Heav'n defend me! Who's this? [Discovering him, starts.

*Bell.* Your lover.

*Læt.* Vainlove's friend! I know his face, and he has betray'd me to him. [Aside.

*Bell.* You are surprized. Did you not expect a lover, madam? Those eyes shone kindly on my first appearance, though now they are o'er-cast.

*Læt.* I may well be surpriz'd at your person and impudence, they are both new to me—You are not what your first appearance promised: the piety of your habit was welcome, but not the hypocrisy.

*Bell.* Rather the hypocrisy was welcome, but not the hypocrite.

*Læt.* Who are you, sir? You have mistaken the house, sure.

*Bell.* I have directions in my pocket, which agree with every thing but your unkindness. [Pulls out the letter.

*Læt.* My letter! Base Vainlove! Then 'tis too late to dissemble. [Aside.] 'Tis plain, then, you have mistaken the person. [Going.

*Bell.* If we part so, I'm mistaken——Hold, hold, madam——I confess I have run into an error——I beg your pardon a thousand times——What an eternal blockhead am I! Can you forgive me the disorder I have put you into?——But it is a mistake which any body might have made.

*Læt.* What can this mean? 'Tis impossible he should be mistaken, after all this—A handsome fellow, if he had not sur-

priz'd me. Methinks, now I look on him again, I would not have him mistaken. [*Aside.*] We are all liable to mistakes, sir; if you own it to be so, there needs no farther apology.

*Bell.* Nay, faith, madam, 'tis a pleasant one, and worth your hearing. Expecting a friend, last night, at his lodgings, 'till 't was late; my intimacy with him gave me the freedom of his bed: he not coming home all night, a letter was deliver'd to me, by a servant, in the morning: upon the perusal, I found the contents so charming, that I could think of nothing all day but putting 'em in practice—'till just now (the first time I ever look'd upon the superscription), I am the most surprized in the world to find it directed to Mr. Vainlove. Gad, madam, I ask you a million of pardons, and will make you any satisfaction.

*Læt.* I am discover'd—and either Vainlove is not guilty, or he has handsomely excus'd him. [*Aside.*]

*Bell.* You appear concern'd, madam.

*Læt.* I hope you are a gentleman—and since you are privy to a weak woman's failing, won't turn it to the prejudice of her reputation. You look as if you had more honour——

*Bell.* And more love; or my face is a false witness, and deserves to be pillory'd—No, by Heaven, I swear——

*Læt.* Nay, don't swear if you'd have me to believe you; but promise——

*Bell.* Well, I promise—A promise is so cold—give me leave to swear—by those eyes, those killing eyes; by those healing lips—Oh! press the soft charm close to mine, and seal 'em up for ever.

*Læt.* Upon that condition.

[*He kisses her.*]

*Bell.* Eternity was in that moment——One more, upon any condition.

*Læt.* Nay, now—I never saw any thing so agreeably impudent. [*Aside.*] Won't you censure me for this, now?—but 'tis to buy your silence. [*Kiss.*] Oh, but what am I doing?

*Bell.* No tongue can express it—not thy own; nor any thing, but thy lips. I am faint with the excess of bliss—Oh, for love's sake, lead me any whither, where I may lay down;—quickly, for I am afraid I shall have a fit.

*Lat.* Bless me! What fit?

*Bell.* Oh, a convulsion—I feel the symptoms.

*Lat.* Does it hold you long? I'm afraid to carry you into my chamber.

*Bell.* Oh, no: let me lay down upon the bed;—the fit will be soon over. [*Exeunt.*]

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SCENE III.

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*St. James's Park. ARAMINTA and BELINDA meeting.*

*Bel.* Lard, my dear: I am glad I have met you—I have been at the exchange since, and am so tir'd—

*Aram.* Why, what's the matter?

*Bel.* Oh, the most inhuman barbarous hackney-coach! I am jolted to a jelly—Am not I horridly touz'd?

[*Pulls out a pocket glass.*]

*Aram.* Your head's a little out of order.

*Bel.* A little! O frightful! What a furious phyz I have! O most rueful! Ha, ha, ha! O gad, I hope nobody will come this way, 'till I have put myself in repair—Ah! my dear—I have seen such unhewn creatures since—Ha, ha, ha! I can't for my soul help thinking that I look just like one of 'em—Good dear, pin this, and I'll tell you—Very well—So, thank you, my dear—But as I was telling you—Pish, this is the untoward'st lock—So as I was telling you—how d'ye like me now? Hideous, ha? frightful still? Or how?

*Aram.* No, no; you're very well as can be.

*Bel.* And so——But where did I leave off, my dear? I was telling you ——

*Aram.* You were about to tell me something, child—but you left off before you began.

*Bel.* Oh, a most comical sight: a country squire, with the equipage of a wife and two daughters, came to Mrs. Snipwell's shop while I was there——But, oh, gad! two such unlick'd cubs!

*Aram.* I warrant, plump, cherry-cheek'd country girls.

*Bel.* Ay, O' my conscience, fat as barn door fowls: but so bedeck'd, you would have taken 'em for Friezland hens, with their feathers growing the wrong way —— O, such out-landish creatures! Such Tramontanæ, and foreigners to the fashion, or any thing in practice! I had no patience to behold—I undertook the modelling of one of their fronts, the more modern structure——

*Aram.* Bless me, cousin; why would you affront any body so? They might be gentlewomen of a very good family——

*Bel.* Of a very ancient one, I dare swear, by their dress—Affront! Pshaw, how you're mistaken! The poor creature, I warrant, was as full of courtesies, as if I had been her godmother. The truth on't is, I did endeavour to make her look like a christian—and she was sensible of it; for she thank'd me and gave me two apples, piping hot, out of her under petticoat-pocket—Ha, ha, ha—And 't other did so stare and gape—I fancied her like the front of her father's hall; her eyes were the two jut-windows, and her mouth the great door, most hospitably kept open for the entertainment of travelling flies.

*Aram.* So, then, you have been diverted. What did they buy?

*Bel.* Why, the father bought a powder-horn, and an almack, and a comb-case; the mother, a great fruz-tower, and a fat amber necklace; the daughters, only tore two pare of kid-



leather gloves, with trying 'em on——Oh, gad, here comes the fool that dined at my Lady Freelove's 't other day.

*Enter Sir JOSEPH and BLUFF.*

*Aram.* May be he may not know us again.

*Bel.* We'll put on our masks to secure his ignorance.

*[They put on their masks.]*

*Sir J.* Nay, gad, I'll pick up; I'm resolv'd to make a night on 't—I'll go to alderman Fondlewife by and by, and get fifty pieces more from him. Adslidikins, bully, we'll wallow in wine and women. Why, this same Madeira wine has made me as light as a grasshopper——Hist, hist, bully, dost thou see those tearers; *[Sings.]* *Look you what here is——Look you what here is——Toll loll——dera——toll loll——* Agad, t'other glass of Madeira, and I durst have attack'd 'em in my own proper person, without your help.

*Bluff.* Come on then, knight——But d'ye know what to say to 'em?

*Sir J.* Say: Pooh. Pox, I've enough to say—never fear it—that is, if I can but think on 't: truth is, I have but a treacherous memory.

*Bel.* Oh, frightful! Cousin, what shall we do? These things come towards us.

*Aram.* No matter—I see Vainlove coming this way—and, to confess my failing, I am willing to give him an opportunity of making his peace with me—and to rid me of these coxcombs, when I seem oppress'd with 'em, will be a fair one.

*Bluff.* Ladies, by these hilts you are well met.

*Aram.* We are afraid not.

*Bluff.* What says my pretty little knapsack carrier.

*[To Belinda.]*

*Bel.* O monstrous filthy fellow! Good slovenly captain Huff, Bluff, what is your hideous name? Begone: you stink of brandy and tobacco, most soldier-like. Foh!

*[Spits.]*

*Sir J.* Now am I slap dash down in the mouth, and have not one word to say ! [*Aside.*

*Aram.* I hope my fool has not confidence enough to be troublesome. [*Aside.*

*Sir J.* Hem ! Pray, madam, which way 's the wind ?

*Aram.* A pithy question—Have you sent your wits for a venture, sir, that you enquire ?

*Sir J.* Nay, now I 'm in—I can prattle like a magpie.

[*Aside.*

*Enter SHARPER and VAINLOVE, at some distance.*

*Bel.* Dear Araminta, I 'm tir'd.

*Aram.* 'Tis but pulling off our masks, and obliging Vainlove to know us. I 'll be rid of my fool by fair means—Well, Sir Joseph, you shall see my face—But begone immediately—I see one that will be jealous, to find me in discourse with you—Be discreet—No reply ; but away. [*Unmasks.*

*Sir J.* The great fortune, that din'd at my lady Freeloze's ! Sir Joseph, thou art a made man. Agad, I 'm in love up to the ears. But I 'll be discreet, and husht. [*Aside.*

*Bluff.* Nay, by the world, I 'll see your face.

*Bel.* You shall.

[*Unmasks.*

*Sharp.* Ladies your humble servant—We were afraid, you would not have given us leave to know you.

*Aram.* We thought to have been private—But we find fools have the same advantage over a face in a mask, that a coward has, while the sword is in the scabbard—So were forced to draw in our own defence.

*Bluff.* My blood rises at that fellow : I can 't stay where he is ; and I must not draw in the park. [*To Sir Joseph.*

*Sir J.* I wish I durst stay to let her know my lodging—

[*Exeunt Sir Jo. and Bluff.*

*Sharp.* There is in true beauty, as in courage, somewhat, which narrow souls cannot dare to admire—and see the owls are fled, as at the break of day.

*Bel.* Very courtly—I believe Mr. Vainlove has not rubb'd his eyes since break of day, neither, he looks as if he durst not approach—Nay, come, cousin, be friends with him—I swear he looks so very simply, ha, ha, ha! Well, a lover in the state of separation from his mistress, is like a body without a soul. Mr. Vainlove, shall I be bound for your good behaviour for the future?

*Vain.* Now must I pretend ignorance equal to hers, of what she knows as well as I. [*Aside.*] Men are apt to offend, 't is true, where they find most goodness to forgive——But, madam, I hope I shall prove of a temper not to abuse mercy, by committing new offences.

*Aram.* So cold!

[*Aside.*

*Bel.* I have broke the ice for you, Mr. Vainlove, and so I leave you. Come, Mr. Sharper, you and I will take a turn, and laugh at the vulgar——both the great vulgar and the small——Oh, gad! I have a great passion for Cowley——do n't you admire him?

*Sharp.* Oh, Madam! He was our English Horace.

*Bel.* Oh, so fine! So extremely fine! So every thing in the world that I like——O Lord, walk this way—I see a couple, I'll give you their history. [*Exeunt Bel. and Sharp.*

*Vain.* I find, madam, the formality of the law must be observ'd, tho' the penalty of it be dispens'd with; and an offender must plead to his arraignment, though he has his pardon in his pocket.

*Aram.* I'm amaz'd? This insolence exceeds t'other—whoever has encourag'd you to this assurance—presuming upon the easiness of my temper, has much deceiv'd you, and so you shall find.

*Vain.* Hey day! Which way now! Here's fine doubling.

[*Aside.*

*Aram.* Base man! Was it not enough to affront me with your saucy passion?

*Vain.* You have given that passion a much kinder epithet than saucy, in another place.

*Aram.* Another place! Some villanous design to blast my honour—But though thou hadst all the treachery and malice of thy sex, thou canst not lay a blemish on my fame——No, I have not err'd in one favourable thought of mankind——“How time might have deceiv'd me in you, I know not; my opinion was but young, and your early baseness has prevented its growing to a wrong belief”——Unworthy and ungrateful! Begone and never see me more.

*Vain.* Did I dream? Or do I dream? Shall I believe my eyes or ears? The vision is here still—Your passion, madam, will admit of no farther reasoning—But here's a silent witness of your acquaintance. [*Takes out a letter, and offers it: she snatches it, and throws it away.*

*Aram.* There's poison in every thing you touch—blisters will follow——

*Vain.* That tongue which denies what the hands have done——

*Aram.* Still mystically senseless and impudent—I find I must leave the place.

*Vain.* No, madam, I'm gone—She knows her name's to it, which she will be unwilling to expose to the censure of the first finder. [*Exit.*

*Aram.* Woman's obstinacy made me blind, to what woman's curiosity now tempts me to see. [*Takes up the letter, and exit.*

*Enter BELINDA and SHARPER.*

*Bel.* Nay, we have spared nobody, I swear. Mr. Sharper, you're a pure man; where did you get this excellent talent of railing?

*Sharp.* Faith, madam, the talent was born with me.——  
I confess, I have taken care to improve it; to qualify me for  
the society of ladies.

*Bel.* Nay, sure railing is the best qualification in a woman's  
man.

*Enter Footman.*

*Sharp.* The second best——indeed, I think.

*Bel.* How now? Pace? Where's my cousin?

*Foot.* She's not very well, madam, and has sent to know, if  
your ladyship would have the coach come again for you.

*Bel.* O Lord, no, I'll go along with her. Come, Mr.  
Sharper.

#### SCENE IV.

*A Chamber in Fondlewife's House. Enter LÆTITIA and BELL-  
MOUR, his cloak, hat, &c. lying loose about the Chamber.*

*Bell.* Here's nobody, nor no noise——'twas nothing but  
your fears.

*Læt.* I durst have sworn I had heard my monster's voice  
——I swear, I was heartily frightened——Feel how my  
heart beats.

*Bell.* 'Tis an alarm to love——Come in again, and let  
us——

*Fond.* [*Without.*] Cocky, cocky, where are you, cocky? I'm  
come home.

*Læt.* Ah! there he is, make haste, gather up your things!

*Fond.* Cocky, cocky, open the door.

*Bell.* Pox choak him, would his horns were in his throat.  
My patch, my patch.

[*Looking about, and gathering up his things.*]



*Læt.* My jewel, art thou there? No matter for your patch  
—You s'an't tum in, Nykin—Run into my chamber,  
quickly, quickly. You s'an't tum in.

*Fond.* Nay, pr'ythee, dear, ifeck I'm in haste.

*Læt.* Then I'll let you in. *[Opens the door.]*

*Enter FONDLEWIFE and Sir JOSEPH.*

*Fond.* Kiss, dear——I met the master of the ship by the  
way——And I must have my papers of accounts out of your  
cabinet.

*Læt.* Oh, I'm undone! *[Aside.]*

*Sir J.* Pray, first let me have fifty pounds, good alderman,  
for I'm in haste.

*Fond.* A hundred has already been paid by your order.  
Fifty? I have the sum ready in gold, in my closet.

*[Exit Fond.]*

*Sir J.* Agad, it's a curious, fine, pretty rogue; I'll speak to  
her——Pray, madam, what news d'ye hear?

*Læt.* Sir, I seldom stir abroad. *[Walks about in disorder.]*

*Sir J.* I wonder at that, madam, for 't is most curious fine  
weather.

*Læt.* Methinks, 't has been very ill weather.

*Sir J.* As you say, madam, 't is pretty bad weather, and has  
been so a great while.

*Enter FONDLEWIFE.*

*Fond.* Here are fifty pieces in this purse, Sir Joseph—If you  
will tarry a moment, 'till I fetch my papers, I'll wait upon you  
down stairs.

*Læt.* Ruin'd, past redemption! What shall I do—Ha! this  
fool may be of use. *[Aside.]* *[As Fondlewife is going into the*  
*chamber, she runs to Sir Joseph, almost pushes him down, and cries*  
*out.]* Stand off, rude ruffian! Help me, my dear—O bless  
me! Why will you leave me alone with such a satyr?

*Fond.* Bless us! what's the matter? What's the matter?

*Læt.* Your back was no sooner turn'd, but like a lion, he came open-mouth'd upon me, and would have ravish'd a kiss from me by main force.

*Sir J.* Oh, Lord! Oh, terrible! Ha, ha, ha! is your wife mad, alderman?

*Læt.* Oh! I'm sick with the fright. Won't-you take him out of my sight?

*Fond.* Oh, traitor! I'm astonished. Oh, bloody-minded traitor!

*Sir J.* Hey-day! traitor yourself—By the lord Harry, I was in most danger of being ravish'd, if you go to that.

*Fond.* Oh, how the blasphemous wretch swears! Out of my house, thou son of the whore of Babylon; offspring of Bell and the dragon—Bless us! Ravish my wife! my Dinah! Oh, Shechemite! Begone, I say.

*Sir J.* Why, the devil's in the people, I think.

*Læt.* Oh! won't you follow and see him out of doors, my dear?

*Fond.* I'll shut this door to secure him from coming back—Give me the key of your cabinet, cocky—Ravish my wife before my face! I warrant he's a Papist in his heart, at least, "if not a Frenchman."

*Læt.* What can I do now? [*Aside.*] Oh! my dear, I have been in such a fright, that I forgot to tell you, poor Mr. Spintext has a sad fit of the cholic, and is forced to lie down upon our bed——You'll disturb him; I can tread softer.

*Fond.* Alack, poor man—no, no—you don't know the papers—I won't disturb him; give me the key.

[*She gives him the key, goes to the chamber door, and speaks aloud.*]

*Læt.* 'Tis nobody but Mr. Fondlewife; Mr. Spintext, lie still on your stomach; lying on your stomach will ease you of the cholic.

*Fond.* Ay, ay, lie still, lie still; do n't let me disturb you.

[*Exit Fond.*]

*Læt.* Sure, when he does not see his face, he wo n't discover him. Dear Fortune, help me but this once, and I'll never run in thy debt again——But this opportunity is the devil.

*Fondlewife returns with papers.*

*Fond.* Good lack! good lack!——I profess, the poor man is in great torment, he lies as flat——Dear, you should heat a trencher, or a napkin——Where's Deborah? Let her clap some warm thing to his stomach, or chafe it with a warm hand, rather than fail. What book's this?

[*Sees the book that Bellmour forgot.*]

*Læt.* Mr. Spintext's prayer-book, dear——Pray heaven it be a prayer-book.

[*Aside.*]

*Fond.* Good man! I warrant he dropped it on purpose, that you might take it up, and read some of the pious ejaculations [*Taking up the book*] O, bless me! O, monstrous! A prayer-book! Ay, this is the devil's Pater-noster. Hold, let me see, The Innocent Adultery.

*Læt.* Misfortune! now all's ruin'd again.

[*Aside.*]

“*Bell.* [*Peeping.*] Damn'd chance! If I had gone a whoring with the Practice of Piety in my pocket, I had never been discovered.”

*Fond.* Adultery and innocent! O, lord! Here's doctrine! Ay, here's discipline!

*Læt.* Dear husband, I'm amaz'd——Sure it is a good book, and only tends to the speculation of sin.

*Fond.* Speculation! No, no; something went farther than speculation, when I was not to be let in——Where is this apocryphal elder? I'll ferret him.

*Læt.* I'm so distracted, I can't think of a lie.

[*Aside.*]

[*Fondlewife hauls out Bellmour.*]

*Fond.* Come out here, thou Ananias incarnate — Who, how now! who have we here?

*Læt.* Ha? *[Sbricks, as surpriz'd.*

*Fond.* Oh, thou salacious woman! Am I then brutified? Ay, I feel it here! I sprout, I bud, I blossom, I am ripe horn-mad. But who, in the devil's name, are you? Mercy on me for swearing. But —

*Læt.* Oh, goodness keep us! Who's this? Who are you? What are you?

*Bell.* Soh!

*Læt.* In the name of the — Oh! Good, my dear, don't come near it, I'm afraid 't is the devil! indeed it has hoofs, dear.

*Fond.* Indeed, and I have horns, dear. The devil! No, I am afraid, 't is the flesh, thou harlot! Dear, with the pox. Come, siren, speak, confess who is this reverend rampant pastor?

*Læt.* Indeed, and indeed now, my dear Nykin — I never saw this wicked man before.

*Fond.* Oh, it is a man then, it seems.

*Læt.* Rather, sure, 't is a wolf in the cloathing of a sheep.

*Fond.* Thou art a devil in his proper cloathing, woman's flesh. What, you know nothing of him but his fleece here — You don't love mutton? — You Magdalen unconverted.

*Bell.* Well, now, I know my cue — that is, very honourably to excuse her, and very impudently accuse myself.

*[Aside.*

*Læt.* Why then, I wish I may never enter into the heaven of your embraces again, my dear, if ever I saw his face before.

*Fond.* O, lord! O, strange! I am in admiration of your impudence. Look at him a little better; he is more modest, I warrant you, than to deny it. Come, were you two never face to face before? Speak.

*Bell.* Since all artifice is vain—and I think myself obliged to speak the truth, in justice to your wife——No,

*Fond.* Humph!

*Læt.* No, indeed, dear.

*Fond.* Nay, I find you are both in a story; that I must confess. But, what—not to be cured of the cholic? Do n't you know your patient, Mrs. Quack? Oh, lie upon your stomach; lying upon your stomach will cure you of the cholic. Ah! Answer me, Jezabel!

*Læt.* Let the wicked man answer for himself? Does he think that I have nothing to do but excuse him; 't is enough, if I can clear my own innocence to my own dear.

*Bell.* By my troth, and so 't is——I have been a little too backward, that 's the truth on 't.

*Fond.* Come, sir, who are you, in the first place? And what are you?

*Bell.* A whore-master.

*Fond.* Very concise.

*Læt.* O beastly, impudent creature!

*Fond.* Well, sir, and what came you hither for?

*Bell.* To lie with your wife.

*Fond.* Good, again——A very civil person this, and, I believe, speaks truth.

*Læt.* Oh, insupportable impudence!

*Fond.* Well, sir,——Pray, be cover'd——and you have——Heh! You have finish'd the matter, heh? And I am, as I should be, a sort of a civil perquisite to a whore-master, called a cuckold, heh. Is it not so? Come, I 'm inclining to believe every word you say.

*Bell.* Why, faith, I must confess, so I designed you—But you were a little unlucky in coming so soon, and hindered the making of your own fortune.



*Fond. Humph.* Nay, if you mince the matter once, and go back of your word, you are not the person I took you for. Come, come, go on boldly——What, don't be ashamed of your profession——Confess, confess, I shall love thee the better for 't——I shall, i'feck——What, dost think I don't know how to behave myself in the employment of a cuckold, and have been three years apprentice to matrimony! Come, come, plain dealing is a jewel.

*Bell.* Well, since I see thou art a good honest fellow, I'll confess the whole matter to thee.

*Fond.* Oh, I am a very honest fellow——You never lay with an honest man's wife in your life.

*Lat.* How, my heart aches! All my comfort lies in his impudence, and, Heaven be prais'd, he has a considerable portion,

[*Aside.*]

*Bell.* In short then, I was informed of the opportunity of your absence, by my spy; for, faith, honest Isaac, I have a long time designed thee this favour: I knew Spintext was to come, by your direction; but I laid a trap for him, and procured his habit, in which I pass'd upon your servants, and was conducted hither. I pretended a fit of the cholic, to excuse my lying down upon your bed; hoping that when she heard of it, her good-nature would bring her to administer remedies for my distemper——You know what might have followed——But, like an uncivil person, you knock'd at the door, before your wife was come to me.

*Fond.* Ha! this is apocryphal; I may choose whether I will believe it or no.

*Bell.* That you may, faith, and I hope you won't believe a word on 't——But I can't help telling the truth, for my life.

*Fond.* How! would not you have me believe you, say you?

*Bell.* No; for then you must of consequence part with your wife, and there will be some hopes of having her upon the public: then, the encouragement of a separate maintenance——

*Fond.* No, no; for that matter—when she and I part, she'll carry her separate maintenance about her.

*Læt.* Ah, cruel dear! how can you be so barbarous? You'll break my heart if you talk of parting. [Cries.

*Fond.* Ah! dissembling vermin!

*Bell.* How canst thou be so cruel, Isaac? Thou hast the heart of a mountain-tyger. By the faith of a sincere sinner, she's innocent for me. Go to him, madam, fling your snowy arms about his stubborn neck. Bathe his relentless face in your salt trickling tears——

*[She goes and hangs upon his neck, and kisses him. Bellmour kisses her hand behind Fondlewife's back.]*

So, a few soft words, and a kiss, and the good man melts. See how kind nature works, and boils over in him.

*Læt.* Indeed, my dear, I was but just come down stairs, when you knock'd at the door; and the maid told me, Mr. Spintext was ill of the cholic upon our bed. And won't you speak to me, cruel Nykin? Indeed, I'll die, if you don't.

*Fond.* Ah! No, no, I cannot speak, my heart's so full—— I have been a tender yoke-fellow; you know I have——But thou hast been a faithless Dalilah, and the Philistines——Heh! Art thou not vile and unclean, heh? Speak. [Weeping.]

*Læt.* No——h. [Sighing.]

*Fond.* Oh, that I could believe thee!

*Læt.* Oh! my heart will break! [Seeming to faint.]

*Fond.* Heh! how! No, no, stay, stay, I will believe thee, I will——Pray bend her forward, sir.

*Læt.* Oh! Oh! Where is my dear?

*Fond.* Here, here; I do believe thee——I won't believe my own eyes.

*Bell.* For my part, I am so charm'd with the love of your turtle to you, that I'll go and solicit matrimony with all my might and main.

*Fond.* Well, well, sir; as long as I believe it, 'tis well enough. No thanks to you, sir, for her virtue.——But, I'll shew you the way out of my house, if you please. Come, my dear. Nay, I will believe thee, I do, i'feck.

*Bell.* See the great blessing of an easy faith; opinion cannot err.

*No husband, by his wife, can be deceiv'd,  
She still is virtuous, if she's so believ'd.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

*Enter BELLMOUR in a fanatic habit; SETTER, HEARTWELL, and LUCY.*

*Bellmour.*

SETTER! well encounter'd.

*Set.* Joy of your return, sir. Have you made a good voyage; or have you brought your own lading back?

*Bell.* No, I have brought nothing but ballast back—"made a delicious voyage, Setter; and might have rode at anchor in the port till this time, but the enemy surpriz'd us,"—I would unrig.

*Set.* I attend you, sir.

*Bell.* Ha! Is not that Heartwell, at Silvia's door? Begone, quickly, I'll follow you:—I would not be known. Pox, take 'em, they stand just in my way. [Exit Setter.

*Heart.* I'm impatient till it be done.

*Lucy.* That may be, without troubling yourself to go again for your brother's chaplain. Do n't you see that stalking form of godliness?

*Heart.* Oh, ay, he's a fanatic.

*Lucy.* An executioner, qualified to do your business. He has been lawfully ordained.

*Heart.* I'll pay him well, if you'll break the matter to him.

*Lucy.* I warrant you——Do you go and prepare your bride. [Exit Heart.

*Bell.* Humph, sits the wind there?——What a lucky rogue am I! Oh, what sport will be here, if I can persuade this wench to secrecy?

*Lucy.* Sir; reverend sir.

*Bell.* Madam.

[Discovers himself.

*Lucy.* Now, goodness have mercy upon me! Mr. Bellmour! is it you?

*Bell.* Even I, what dost think!

*Lucy.* Think! that I should not believe my eyes, and that you are not what you seem to be.

*Bell.* True. But to convince thee who I am, thou know'st my old token. [Kisses her.

*Lucy.* Nay, Mr. Bellmour: O Lard! I believe you are a parson in good earnest, you kiss so devoutly.

*Bell.* Well, your business with me, Lucy?

*Lucy.* I had none, through mistake.

*Bell.* Which mistake you must go through with, Lucy——Come, I know the intrigue between Heartwell and your mistress; and you mistook me for Tribulation Spintext, to marry 'em——Ha! are not matters in this posture——Confess. Come, I'll be faithful; I will, i' faith.——What, diffide in me, Lucy

*Lucy.* Alas-a-day! You and Mr. Vainlove, between you, have ruin'd my poor mistress: you have made a gap in her reputation! and can you blame her, if she make it up with a husband!

*Bell.* Well, is it as I say?

*Lucy.* Well, it is then: but you'll be secret?

*Bell.* Phuh, secret, ay!—And to be out of thy debt, I'll trust thee with another secret. Your mistress must not marry Heartwell, Lucy.

*Lucy.* How! O Lord!——

*Bell.* Nay, don't be in a passion, Lucy—I'll provide a fitter husband for her—Come, here's earnest of my good intentions for thee, too; let this mollify.—[*Gives her money.*] Look you, Heartwell is my friend; and though he be blind, I must not see him fall into the snare, and wittingly marry a whore.

*Lucy.* Whore! I'd have you to know my mistress scorns—

*Bell.* Nay, nay; look you, Lucy; there are whores of as good quality—But to the purpose, if you will give me leave to acquaint you with it—Do you carry on the mistake of me: I'll marry 'em——Nay, don't pause!——If you do, I'll spoil all.——I have some private reasons for what I do, which I'll tell you within.——In the mean time, I promise,——and rely upon me—to help your mistress to a husband: nay, and thee too, Lucy——Here's my hand, I will, with a fresh assurance. [Gives her more money.]

*Lucy.* Ah, the devil is not so cunning——You know my easy nature——Well, for once I'll venture to serve you; but if you do deceive me, the curse of all kind tender-hearted women light upon you.

*Bell.* That's as much as to say, the pox take me.——  
Well, lead on. [Exeunt.]

*Enter VAINLOVE, SHARPER, and SETTER.*

*Sharp.* Just now, say you, gone in with Lucy?

*Set.* I saw him, and stood at the corner where you found me, and overheard all they said: Mr. Bellmour is to marry 'em.

*Sharp.* Ha, ha! 't will be a pleasant cheat.——I'll plague Heartwell, when I see him. Pr'ythee, Frank, let's teaze him; make him fret till he foam at the mouth, and disgorge his matrimonial oath with interest——Come, thou'rt musty——



*Setter.* [To Sharper.] Sir, a word with you. [Whispers him.]

*Vain.* Sharper swears she has forsworn the letter—I'm sure he tells me truth;——but I am not sure she told him truth—Yet she was unaffectedly concern'd, he says: and often blush'd with anger and surprize;——And so I remember in the park——She had reason, if I wrong her——I begin to doubt.

*Sharp.* Say'st thou so?

*Setter.* This afternoon, sir, about an hour before my master receiv'd the letter.

*Sharp.* In my conscience, like enough.

*Setter.* Ay, I know her, sir: at least I'm sure I can fish it out of her: she's the very sluice to her lady's secrets. 'Tis but setting her mill a going, and I can drain her of 'em all.

*Sharp.* Here, Frank, your blood-hound has made out the fault. This letter, that so sticks in thy maw, is counterfeit; only a trick of Silvia, in revenge, contriv'd by Lucy.

*Vain.* Ha! It has a colour——But how do you know it, sirrah?

*Setter.* I do suspect as much;——because why, sir,—She was pumping me about how your worship's affairs stood towards Madam Araminta; as when you had seen her last; when you were to see her next; and where you were to be found at that time; and such like.

*Vain.* And where did you tell her?

*Setter.* In the Piazza.

*Vain.* There I receiv'd the letter——It must be so——And why did you not find me out, to tell me this before, sot?

*Setter.* Sir, I was employed for Mr. Bellmour.

*Sharp.* You were well employ'd——I think there is no objection to the excuse.

*Vain.* Pox o' my saucy credulity——If I have lost her, I deserve it. But if confession and repentance be of force, I'll win her or weary her into a forgiveness. [Exit.]

*Sharp.* Methinks I long to see Bellmour come forth.

*Enter BELLMOUR.*

*Setter.* Talk of the devil—See, where he comes.

*Sharp.* Hugging himself in his prosperous mischief—No real fanatic can look better pleas'd, after a successful sermon of sedition.

*Bell.* Sharper, fortify thy spleen: such a jest! Speak when thou art ready.

*Sharp.* Now, were I ill-natur'd, would I utterly disappoint thy mirth: "hear thee tell thy mighty jest with as much gravity as a bishop hears venereal causes in a spiritual court:" not so much as wrinkle my face with one smile, but let thee look simply, and laugh by thyself.

*Bell.* Pshaw, no: I have a better opinion of thy wit ———  
Gad, I defy thee.——

*Sharp.* Were it not loss of time, you should make the experiment. But honest Setter, here, overheard you with Lucy, and has told me all.

*Bell.* Nay then, I thank thee for not putting me out of countenance. But to tell you something you don't know—— I got an opportunity, after I had married 'em, of discovering the cheat to Silvia. She took it at first as another woman would the like disappointment; but my promise to make her amends quickly with another husband, somewhat pacified her.

*Sharp.* But how the devil do you think to acquit yourself of your promise? Will you marry her yourself?

*Bell.* I have no such intentions at present——Pr'ythee, wilt thou think a little for me? I am sure the ingenious Mr. Setter will assist.

*Setter.* O Lord, sir!

*Bell.* I'll leave him with you, and go shift my habit. [*Exit.*

*Enter Sir JOSEPH, and BLUFF.*

*Sharp.* Heh! Sure Fortune has sent this fool hither on purpose. Setter, stand close; seem not to observe them; and, heark'e——

*[Whispers.]*

*Bluff.* Fear him not—I am prepar'd for him now; and he shall find he might have safer rous'd a sleeping lion.

*Sir J.* Hush, hush; don't you see him?

*Bluff.* Shew him to me.—Where is he?

*Sir J.* Nay, do n't speak so loud—I don't jest, as I did a little while ago—Look yonder—Agad, if he should hear the lion roar, he'd cudgel him into an ass, and his primitive braying. Don't you remember the story of Æsop's Fables, bully? A-gad, there are good morals to be pick'd out of Æsop's Fables, let me tell you that: and Reynard the Fox, too.

*Bluff.* Damn your morals!

*Sir J.* Pr'ythee, do n't speak so loud.

*Bluff.* Damn your morals! I must revenge the affront done to my honour.

*[In a low voice.]*

*Sir J.* Ay, do, do, captain, if you think fitting—You may dispose of your own flesh as you think fitting, d'ye see; but by the lord Harry, I'll leave you.

*[Stealing away upon his tiptoes.]*

*Bluff.* Prodigious! What, will you forsake your friend in extremity! You can't in honour refuse to carry him a challenge.

*[Almost whispering, and treading softly after him.]*

*Sir J.* Pr'ythee, what do you see in my face, that looks as if I would carry a challenge? Honour is your province, captain; take it—All the world know me to be a knight and a man of worship.

*Setter.* I warrant you, sir, I'm instructed.

*Sharp.* Impossible! Araminta take a liking to a fool! *[Aloud.]*

*Setter.* Her head runs on nothing else, nor she can talk of nothing else.

*Sharp.* I know she commended him all the while we were in the park, but thought it had been only to make Vainlove jealous.

*Sir J.* How's this! Good bully, hold your breath, and let's hearken. A-gad, this must be I.

*Sharp.* Death, it can't be.—An oaf, an ideot, a wittal.

*Sir J.* Ay, now it's out; 'tis I, my own individual person.

*Sharp.* A wretch, that has flown for shelter to the lowest shrub of mankind, and seeks protection from a blasted coward.

*Sir J.* That's you, bully back.

[*Bluff frowns upon Sir Joseph.*

*Sharp.* She has given Vainlove her promise to marry him before to-morrow morning.—Has she not? [To *Setter.*

*Setter.* She has, sir——And I have it in charge to attend her all this evening, in order to conduct her to the place appointed.

*Sharp.* Well, I'll go and inform your master; and do you press her to make all the haste imaginable. [*Exit.*

*Setter.* Were I a rogue, now, what a noble prize could I dispose of! A good pinnace, richly laden, and to launch forth under my auspicious convoy. Twelve thousand pounds and all her rigging: besides what lies conceal'd under hatches——Ha! all this committed to my care!—Avaunt, temptation—*Setter*, shew thyself a person of worth; be true to thy trust, and be reputed honest. Reputed honest! Hum; is that all? Ay; for to be honest is nothing; the reputation of it is all. Reputation! what have such poor rogues as I to do with reputation? 'tis above us; and for men of quality they are above it; so that reputation is e'en as foolish a thing as honesty. And for my part, if I meet Sir Joseph with a purse of gold in his hand, I'll dispose of mine to the best advantage.

*Sir J.* Heh, heh, heh : here 't is for you, i'faith, Mr. Setter. Nay, I'll take you at your word. [Chinking a purse.]

*Setter.* Sir Joseph! and the Captain too! Undone, undone! I'm undone, my master's undone, my lady's undone, and all the business is undone.

*Sir J.* No, no, never fear, man, the lady's business shall be done. What——Come, Mr. Setter, I have over-heard all, and to speak is but loss of time; but, if there be occasion, let these worthy gentlemen intercede for me.

[Gives him gold.]

*Setter.* O Lord, sir! what d'ye mean? Corrupt my honesty——They have, indeed, very persuading faces. But——

*Sir J.* 'Tis too little; there's more, man. There, take all——Now——

*Setter.* Well, Sir Joseph, you have such a winning way with you——

*Sir J.* And how, and how, good Setter, did the little rogue look, when she talk'd of Sir Joseph? Did not her eyes twinkle and her mouth water? “ Did not she pull up her little bobbies? “ And—Agad, I'm so overjoy'd——And stroke down her “ belly; and then step aside to tie her garter,” when she was thinking of her love? Heh, Setter!

*Setter.* O yes, sir.

*Sir J.* How now, bully? What, melancholy, because I'm in the lady's favour?——No matter, I'll make your peace——I know they were a little smart upon you——But, I warrant, I'll bring you into the lady's good graces.

*Bluff.* Pshaw! I have petitions to shew from other guess toys than she. Look here; these were sent me this morning——There, read, [Shows letters.] That——that's a scrawl of quality. Here, here's from a countess, too. Hum——No, hold——that's from a knight's wife, she sent it me



by her husband——But here, both these are from persons of great quality.

*Sir J.* They are either from persons of great quality, or no quality at all, 't is such a damn'd ugly hand.

[*While Sir Joseph reads, Bluff whispers* *Setter.*

*Setter.* Captain, I would do any thing to serve you; but this is so difficult——

*Bluff.* Not at all. Don't I know him?

*Setter.* You'll remember the conditions;——

*Bluff.* I'll giv't you under my hand——In the mean time, here's earnest. [*Gives him money.*] Come, knight——I'm capitulating with Mr. Setter, for you.

*Sir J.* Ah, honest Setter——Sirrah, I'll give thee any thing, "but a night's lodging." [*Exeunt.*

*Enter SHARPER, tugging in HEARTWELL.*

*Sharp.* Nay, pr'ythee leave railing, and come along with me; may be she may n't be within. 'Tis but to yond' corner-house.

*Heart.* Whither? Whither? Which corner-house?

*Sharp.* Why, there; the two white posts.

*Heart.* And who would you visit there, say you? (Oons, how my heart akes.)

*Sharp.* Pshaw! thou'rt so troublesome and inquisitive——Why, I'll tell you; 't is a young creature that Vainlove debauch'd, and has forsaken. Did you never hear Bellmour chide him about Silvia?

*Heart.* Death, and hell, and marriage! my wife. [*Aside.*

*Sharp.* Why, thou art as musty as a new-married man, that had found his wife knowing the first night.

*Heart.* Hell, and the devil! Does he know it? But, hold——If he should not, I were a fool to discover it——I'll dis-

semble, and try him. [*Aside.*] Ha, ha, ha! Why, Tom, is that such an occasion of melancholy? Is it such an uncommon mischief?

*Sharp.* No, faith; I believe not.—Few women, but have their year of probation, before they are cloister'd in the narrow joys of Wedlock. But, pr'y thee come along with me, or I'll go and have the lady to myself. B'w'y George. [*Going.*

*Heart.* O torture! How he racks and tears me!—Death! Shall I own my shame, or wittingly let him go and whore my wife? No, that's insupportable—Oh, Sharper?

*Sharp.* How now?

*Heart.* Oh, I am—marry'd.

*Sharp.* Now, hold spleen. [*Aside.*] Marry'd!

*Heart.* Certainly, irrecoverably marry'd.

*Sharp.* Heav'n forbid, man! How long?

*Heart.* Oh, an age, an age! I have been marry'd these two hours.

*Sharp.* My old batchelor marry'd! That were a jest. Ha, ha, ha!

*Heart.* Death! d'ye mock me? Hark ye, if either you esteem my friendship, or your own safety—come not near that house—that corner house—that hot brothel. Ask no questions.

*Sharp.* Mad, by this light.

[*Exit Heart.*

*Thus grief still treads upon the heels of pleasure:*

*Marry'd in haste, we may repent at leisure.*

*Enter SETTER.*

*Setter.* Some by experience find those words misplac'd:

*At leisure marry'd, they repent in haste,*

As I suppose my master Heartwell.

*Sharp.* Here again, my Mercury!

*Setter.* Sublimate, if you please, sir: I think my achievements do deserve the epithet—Mercury was a pimp too; but though I blush to own it at this time, I must confess, I am somewhat fallen from the dignity of my function, and do condescend to be scandalously employed in the promotion of vulgar matrimony.

*Sharp.* As how, dear dexterous pimp?

*Setter.* Why, to be brief, for I have weighty affairs depending—Our stratagem succeeded as you intended—Bluff turns arrant traitor; bribes me to make a private conveyance of the lady to him, and put a sham-settlement upon Sir Joseph.

*Sharp.* O rogue! Well, but I hope——

*Setter.* No, no; never fear me, sir—I privately inform'd the knight of the treachery; who has agreed, seemingly to be cheated, that the captain may be so in reality.

*Sharp.* Where's the bride?

*Setter.* Shifting clothes for the purpose, at a friend's house of mine. Here's company coming; if you'll walk this way, sir, I'll tell you. [*Exeunt.*]

*Enter* BELLMOUR, BELINDA, ARAMINTA, and VAINLOVE.

*Vain.* O, 'twas frenzy all: cannot you forgive it?——  
Men in madness have a title to your pity. [*To* Araminta.]

*Aram.* ——Which they forfeit, when they are restor'd to their senses.

*Vain.* I am not presuming beyond a pardon.

*Aram.* You, who could reproach me with one counterfeit, how insolent would a real pardon make you? But there's no need to forgive what is not worth my anger.

*Bel.* O' my conscience, I could find in my heart to marry thee, purely to be rid of thee—At least, thou art so troublesome a lover, there's hopes thou'lt make a more than ordinary quiet husband. [*To* Bellmour,]

*Bell.* Say you so——Is that a maxim among ye?

“*Belin.* Yes: you fluttering men of the mode have made marriage a mere French dish.

“*Bell.* I hope there’s no French sauce. [Aside.

“*Bel.* You are so curious in the preparation, that is, your courtship, one wou’d think you meant a noble entertainment —But when we come to feed, ’t is all froth and poor, but in show. Nay, often, only remains, which have been I know not how many times warm’d for other company, and at last serv’d up cold to the wife.

“*Bell.* That were a miserable wretch indeed, who could not afford one warm dish for the wife of his bosom—But you, timorous virgins, form a dreadful chimæra of a husband, as of a creature contrary to that soft, humble, pliant, easy thing, a lover; so guess at plagues in matrimony, in opposition to the pleasures of courtship. Alas! courtship to marriage, is but as the music in the play-house, ’till the curtain’s drawn; but that once up, then opens the scene of pleasure.

“*Bel.* Oh, foh—no: rather, courtship to marriage, as a very witty prologue to a very dull play.”

*Enter SHARPER.*

*Sharp.* Hist,——Bellmour: if you’ll bring the ladies, make haste to Silvia’s lodgings, before Heartwell has fretted himself out of breath.—

*Bell.* You have an opportunity now, madam, to revenge yourself upon Heartwell, for affronting your squirrel.

[To Belinda.

*Bel.* Oh, the filthy rude beast.

*Aram.* ’T is a lasting quarrel: I think he has never been at our house since.

*Bell.* But give yourselves the trouble to walk to that corner-house, and I’ll tell you by the way what may divert and surprise you.

[Exeunt.

## SCENE II.

*Silvia's Lodgings. Enter HEARTWELL and boy.*

*Heart.* Gone forth, say you, with her maid?

*Boy.* There was a man too that fetch'd 'em out—Setter, I think they call him.

*Heart.* Soh——That precious pimp too—Damn'd, damn'd strumpet! Could she not contain herself on her wedding day! Not hold out till night! O, cursed state! how wide we err, when apprehensive of the load of life,

——We hope to find

*That help which Nature meant in womankind,*

*To man that supplemental self design'd;*

*But proves a burning caustic when apply'd,*

*And Adam, sure, could with more ease abide*

*The bone when broken, than when made a bride.*

*Enter BELLMOUR, BELINDA, VAINLOVE and ARAMINTA.*

*Bell.* Now, George, what rhyming: I thought the chimes of verse were past, when once the doleful marriage knell was rung.

*Heart.* Shame and confusion! I am exposed.

*[Vainlove and Araminta talk apart.]*

*Bel.* Joy, joy, Mr. Bridegroom; I give you joy, sir.

*Heart.* 'Tis not in thy nature to give me joy——A woman can as soon give immortality.

*Bel.* Ha, ha, ha! O gad, men grow such clowns when they are marry'd.

*Bell.* That they are fit for no company but their wives.

*Bel.* Nor for them neither, in a little time——I swear at the months end, you shall hardly find a marry'd man that will do



a civil thing to his wife, or say a civil thing to any body else. How he looks already! Ha, ha, ha!

*Bell.* Ha, ha, ha!

*Heart.* Death! am I made your laughing stock? For you, sir, I shall find a time; but take off your wasp here, or the clown may grow boisterous: I have a fly-flap.

*Bel.* You have occasion for't, your wife has been blown upon.

*Bell.* That's home.

*Heart.* Not friends or furies could have added to my vexation, or any thing else but another woman—You've rack'd my patience; begone, or by——

*Bell.* Hold, hold! What the devil, thou wilt not draw upon a woman?

*Vain.* What's the matter?

*Aram.* Bless me! What have you done to him?

*Bel.* Only touch'd a gall'd beast 'till he winch'd.

*Vain.* Bellmour, give it over; you vex him too much; 't is all serious to him.

*Bel.* Nay, I swear, I begin to pity him myself.

*Heart.* Damn your pity—But let me be calm a little—How have I deserv'd this of you, any of ye? Sir, have I impair'd the honour of your house, promis'd your sister marriage, and seduc'd her? Wherein have I injured you? Did I bring a physician to your father when he lay expiring, and endeavour to prolong his life, and you one and twenty? Madam, have I had an opportunity with you and baulk'd it? Did you ever offer me the favour and I refus'd it? Or——

*Bel.* Oh, foh! What does the filthy fellow mean? Lard, let me be gone.

*Aram.* Hang me if I pity you; you are right enough serv'd.

“ *Bell.* 'This is a little scurrilous tho'.

*Vain.* "Nay, 't is a sore of your own scratching"—Well, George——

*Heart.* You are the principal cause of all my present ills. If Silvia had nor been your mistress, my wife might have been honest.

*Vain.* And if Silvia had not been your wife, my mistress might have been just—There we are even—but have a good heart, I heard of your misfortune, and am come to your relief.

*Heart.* When execution's over, you offer a reprieve.

*Vain.* What would you give?

*Heart.* Oh! any thing, every thing, a leg, or two, or an arm: "nay, I would be divorce'd from my virility, to be divorced from my wife,"

*Enter SHARPER.*

*Vain.* Don't offer so much, for here's one that can sell you freedom cheaper.

*Sharpe.* Vainlove, I have been a kind of god-father to you, yonder. I have promis'd and vow'd some things in your name, which I think you are bound to perform.

*Vain.* No signing to a blank, friend.

*Sharpe.* No; I'll deal fairly with you—'T is a full and free discharge to Sir Joseph Wittol and Captain Bluff; for all injuries whatsoever, done unto you by them, until the present date hereof—How say you?

*Vain.* Agreed.

*Sharpe.* Then, let me beg these ladies to wear their masks a moment. Come in, gentlemen and ladies.

*Heart.* What the devil's all this to me!

*Vain.* Patience.

*Enter Sir JOSEPH, BLUFF, SILVIA, LUCY, and SETTER.*

*Bluff.* All injuries whatsoever, Mr. Sharper.

*Sir J.* Ay, ay, whatsoever, captain, stick to that; whatsoever.

*Sharp.* 'Tis done, these gentlemen are witnesses to the general release.

*Vain.* Ay, ay, to this instant moment—and I have pass'd an act of oblivion.

*Bluff.* 'Tis very generous, sir, since I needs must own—

*Sir J.* No, no, captain, you need not own; heh, heh, heh, 'tis I must own—

*Bluff.*—That you are over-reach'd too, ha, ha, ha! only a little art military used—only undermined, or so, as shall appear by the fair Araminta, my wife's permission. [*Lucy unmask.*] Oh, the devil, cheated at last!

*Sir J.* Only a little art-military trick, captain, only countermin'd, or so—Mr. Vainlove, I suppose you know whom I have got—now, but all's forgiven.

*Vain.* I know whom you have not got. Pray, ladies convince him. [*Aram. and Bel. unmask.*]

*Sir J.* Ah! O lord, my heart akes—Ah, Setter, a rogue of all sides.

*Sharp.* Sir Joseph, you had better have pre-engaged this gentleman's pardon; for though Vainlove be so generous to forgive the loss of his mistress—I know not how Heartwell may take the loss of his wife. [*Silvia unmask.*]

*Heart.* My wife! By this light 'tis she, the very cockatrice—Oh, Sharper! Let me embrace thee—But art thou sure she is really married to him?

*Setter.* Really and lawfully married, I am witness.

*Sharp.* Bellmour will unriddle to you.

[*Heartwell goes to Bellmour.*]

*Sir J.* Pray, madam, who are you? For I find you and I are like to be better acquainted.

*Silv.* The worst of me is, that I am your wife—

*Sharp.* Come, Sir Joseph, your fortune is not so bad as your fear——A fine lady, and a lady of very good quality.

*Sir J.* Thanks to my knighthood, she's a lady——

*Vain.*——That deserves a fool with a better title——Pray use her as my relation, or you shall hear on't.

*Bluff.* What, are you a woman of quality too, spouse?

*Setter.* And my relation; pray let her be respected accordingly——Well, honest Lucy, fare thee well——I think you and I have been play-fellows, off and on, any time this seven years.

*Lucy.* Hold your prating—I'm thinking what vocation I shall follow while my spouse is planting laurels in the wars.

*Bluff.* No more wars, spouse, no more wars——While I plant laurels for my head abroad, I may find the branches sprout at home.

*Heart.* Bellmour, I approve thy mirth, and thank thee——And I cannot in gratitude, for I see which way thou art going, see thee fall into the same snare, out of which thou hast deliver'd me.

*Bell.* I thank thee, George, for thy good intention——But there is a fatality in marriage—for I find I'm resolute.

*Heart.* Then good counsel will be thrown away upon you——For my my part, I have once escaped——And when I wed again, may she be—ugly as an old bawd.

*Vain.* Ill-natur'd as an old maid——

*Bell.* Wanton as a young widow——

*Sharp.* And jealous as a barren wife.

*Heart.* Agreed.

*Bell.* Well; 'midst of these dreadful denunciations, and notwithstanding the warning and example before me, I commit myself to lasting durance.

*Bel.* Prisoner, make much of your fetters. [*Giving her hand.*]

*Bell.* Frank, will you keep us in countenance?

*Vain.* May I presume to hope so great a blessing?

*Aram.* We had berter take the advantage of a little of our friends experience first.

*Bell.* O' my conscience she dare not consent, for fear he should recant. [*Aside.*] Well, we shall have your company to church in the morning—May be it may get you an appetite to see us fall before you; "Setter, did not you tell me—

" *Setter.* They're at the door; I'll call 'em in.

" A DANCE."

*Bell.* Now set me forward on a journey for life—Come, take your fellow travellers. Old George, I'm sorry to see thee still plod on alone.

*Heart.* *With gaudy plumes, and gingling bells made proud,  
The youthful beast sets forth, and neighs aloud.  
A morning-sun his tinsell'd harness gilds,  
And the first stage a down-hill green-sward yields.  
But, Oh!—*

*What rugged ways attend the noon of life!  
Our sun declines, and with what anxious strife,  
What pain we tug that galling load, a wife.  
All coursers the first beat with vigour run;  
But 't is with whip and spur the race is won.*

[*Exeunt Omnes.*

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## EPILOGUE.

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*As a rash girl, who will all hazards run,  
And be enjoy'd, tho' sure to be undone ;  
Soon as her curiosity is over,  
Would give the world she could her toy recover :  
So fares it with our poet ; and I'm sent  
To tell you, he already does repent.  
Would you were all as forward, to keep lent.  
Now the deed's done, the giddy thing has leisure  
To think o' th' sting, that's in the tail of pleasure.  
Methinks, I hear him in consideration :  
What will the world say ? Where's my reputation ?  
Now that's at stake——No, fool, 't is out o' fashion.  
If loss of that should follow want of wit,  
How many undone men were in the pit !  
Why, that's some comfort to an author's fears,  
If he's an ass, he will be try'd by's peers.  
But hold——I am exceeding my commission !  
My business here, was humbly to petition.  
But we're so us'd to rail on these occasions,  
I could not help one trial of your patience :  
For 't is our way, you know, for fear o' th' worst,  
To be beforehand still, and cry fool first.  
How say you, sparks ? How do you stand affected ?  
I swear, young Bays within, is so dejected,  
'T would grieve your hearts to see him ; shall I call him ?  
But then you cruel critics would so maul him !*

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*Yet, may be, you'll encourage a beginner;  
But how?—Just as the devil does a sinner.  
Women and wits are us'd e'en much as one,  
You gain your end, and damn 'em when you've done.*

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THE END.

7 III 52

# HENRY THE SECOND;

OR, THE

FALL OF ROSAMOND.

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A

TRAGEDY,

---

BY THOMAS HULL.

---

AS PERFORMED AT THE  
THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

---

REGULATED BY THE AUTHOR.

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LONDON:

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*Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of*  
JOHN BELL, British Library, STRAND,  
Bookseller to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

M DCC XCV.





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## PREFACE.

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I HOLD it an indispensable duty to mention some circumstances, which gave birth to the following scenes, wherein I shall not only indulge my pride, but, perhaps, in some degree, palliate the boldness, and (as it may be thought by many) presumption of my undertaking.

The fable and conduct of this Tragedy were projected as long ago as the year 1761, by the late Mr. Shenstone, at his sweet retirement, the Leasowes, in Warwickshire. Herein consists my pride, that I enjoyed a happy (but too short) intimacy with that amiable and accomplished man.

In the summer of the same year, \* Mr. Shenstone had been present at the performance of a hasty alteration of Mr. Hawkins's tragedy of *Henry and Rosamond*, which I produced at the theatre at Birmingham, for the temporary use of a particular friend. Undigested and imperfect as it was, that excellent judge said, there was a pathos in the story, which notwithstanding the defects of the drama, made the representation very pleasing; and he signified his wonder, that such an affecting and popular tale should not have found its way to the stage. Hence arose many conversations on the subject, all which terminated in his advising me to make the story my own. The known kindness of his heart, perhaps gave me credit for greater abilities, than I really possessed. He continued to encourage me with a warmth which flatters me in the recollection; and, after I had left Warwickshire, obliged me with several letters to the same purpose, which I still preserve as valuable relics.

In one of those letters he suggested the character of the Abbot; in order, as he said, to add a little more business to a story, which otherwise might be too barren to furnish matter for five acts. It may easily be supposed I forthwith adopted his idea, and carefully treasured in my mind every sentiment he let fall on this, as well as other subjects; and I can say, with great truth, that among the many conversations I enjoyed with that excellent man, I never knew one from which I did not derive considerable instruction, as well as delight.

The unexpected loss of this most estimable friend \* (which will ever

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\* See Mr. Shenstone's Letter, No. 105, to Mr. Graves, Sept. 14, 1761.

\* He died Feb. 11, 1763.

be lamented by all who knew him) dispirited me from the undertaking, and I laid aside my plan, together with all his letters, till the beginning of last year. The scheme itself, it is true, had often in the interval, occurred to my remembrance, but a doubt of my ability to execute it, even in a passable manner, deterred me from the attempt.

Mrs. Hartley's arrival at Covent-Garden Theatre, and the warm solicitations of a friend, induced me once more to resume the design. The happy suitability (if I may be allowed the phrase) of her figure, to the description of Rosamond (as may be found in Dr. Percy's amusing and instructive collection of old ballads, Vol. ii. page 137) viz.

Her crisped locks, like threads of golde,  
Appear'd to each man's sight;

assisted by the softness and gentleness of her demeanour, encouraged me, at length, to make the attempt; and the universal approbation given by the public to her appearance, manner and performance, on the first representation of this play, happily convinced me I was not singular in my opinion.

In the general execution of the piece I have paid a particular attention to the old ballad, and endeavoured at a simplicity of style, both which Mr. Shenstone earnestly recommended. I am not conscious of any further helps, except having adopted the idea (not the matter) of an interview between the king and Clifford in the monastery, from Mr. Hawkins.

I had originally made Clifford die of a broken heart, under the sanction of the death of king Lear, as originally drawn by that great master of human nature, Shakespeare; but the general opinion of the public, and the persuasions of my friends, induced me to vary my design in the representation.

I have little further to add, but my intreaties that the reader will be pleased to judge with lenity, what was undertaken with diffidence.

Advised, assisted, and encouraged as I was originally, to this undertaking, by the possessor of such eminent abilities, and such benignity of disposition, I seek no living patron, but pride myself in having this opportunity to dedicate my humble production,

With the warmest affection

and gratitude,

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TO THE  
MEMORY

OF  
WILLIAM SHENSTONE,  
ESQ.

WESTMINSTER,  
January 17, 1774.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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*THE Author would justly incur the charge of ingratitude were he not to return his warmest acknowledgments to the Public for their very indulgent reception and continued encouragement of this Play; to Mr. Colman for his spirited and deservedly-admired Epilogue; and to the Performers for their zeal and assiduity in the study and support of their respective characters.*

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## PROLOGUE.

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Written and Spoken by the Author.

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*LONG* time oppress'd with painful doubts and fears,  
At length the dread decisive hour appears,  
The awful trial comes! and here I stand,  
T' abide the verdict of my native land.  
Will not the judge himself for favour plead,  
When the poor trembling culprit owns the deed;  
When in false arts he scorns to seek support,  
But throws him on the mercy of the court?

Such is my state, whom wild ambition draws  
To stand the judgment of dramatic laws;  
Bold the attempt (and, much I fear, in vain)  
That I, the humblest in the muses train,  
Should dare produce, in this nice-judging age,  
My own weak efforts on the dangerous stage!

Had I the slightest touch of plaintive Rowe,  
Whose numbers oft have bade your sorrows flow,  
Your plaudit undismay'd I might implore,  
And Rosamond might plead like hapless Shore:

But as it is, your kindness be my friend,  
For that alone I sue—to that I bend.  
If by an artless tale—in artless strain,  
A mild and patient hearing I obtain,  
And, my poor labours o'er, behold ye part  
With unpain'd ear and undisgusted heart,



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*'Twere triumph and delight! but if the lays,  
Deserve your censure, which aspir'd to praise,  
Ev'n to your kindness will I not presume,  
Nor strive to deprecate my proper doom;  
This sole indulgence let my fault procure,  
Mildly inflict, submissive I endure.*

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## Dramatis Personae.

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### COVENT-GARDEN.

#### *Men.*

HENRY II. <i>king of England,</i>	-	-	-	Mr. Smith.
PRINCE HENRY,	-	-	-	Mr. Wroughton.
CLIFFORD, <i>father to Rosamond,</i>	-	-	-	Mr. Hull.
ABBOT,	-	-	-	Mr. Clarke.
SALISBURY,	-	-	-	Mr. Gardner.
VERULAM,	-	-	-	Mr. R. Smith.
LEICESTER,	-	-	-	Mr. Thompson.

#### *Women.*

QUEEN ELEANOR,	-	-	-	Miss Miller.
ROSAMOND,	-	-	-	Mrs. Hartley.
ETHELINDA,	-	-	-	Mrs. Poussan.

SCENE, *Oxford, and Places adjacent.*

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7 JUL 52

Act IV. HENRY II OR FALL OF ROSAMUND. Scene II.



*Roberts del.*

*Pyg scul.*

*M<sup>rs</sup> HARTLEY as ROSAMUND.*

*Oh, did I ever think I could refuse  
what Henry asked—*

London Printed for J. Ball, British Library, Strand, May 22, 1796.





7 JUL 52



## HENRY THE SECOND;

OR, THE

## FALL OF ROSAMOND.

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### ACT I. SCENE I.

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*An Apartment in Salisbury's House Enter CLIFFORD and  
SALISBURY.*

*Clifford.*

SALISBURY, no more; seek not with empty words  
To talk down grief like mine; hadst thou a child,  
Whom thy fond heart had dwell'd and doated on,  
As mine on Rosamond, and felt'st the pang  
Of seeing her devote her matchless beauty  
To lawless love, her dignity and virtue  
To infamy, and shame, thou wouldst not brook  
Vain consolation.

*Sal.* Judge not I esteem  
Thy suff'rings light, or think thy pains will yield  
To cold philosophy.

*Cliff.* No——wouldst thou ease  
The tortur'd wretch, thou must sit down beside him,  
Shed tear for tear, in sympathizing silence;  
List to the tale which sorrow loves to tell,  
And, by partaking the distressful cause,  
Sooth the strong woe that will not be controul'd.

*Sal.* Give thy full bosom vent, thy friend shall wait  
With patient and participating heart.

*Cliff.* I ask but that; for shouldst thou weary language,  
Ransack the stores of subtle sophistry,  
For deepest arguments—my simple answer  
Confutes and baffles all—I've lost my child.

*Sal.* I grant it, lord, and meant alone to stand  
A friendly mediator 'twixt thyself  
And the o'er-ruling tumults of thy mind.  
I dread their violence. Did'st thou not talk  
Of vengeance and redress? Whence should they spring?  
Where wouldst thou point them? Say, is this a time  
To add to Henry's troubles? now, when dark  
Intestine feuds and foreign foes combine  
To shake his throne and peace?

*Cliff.* Cousin, thou call'st  
A blush to these old cheeks at the bare thought  
Of what thy words imply. Think'st thou I mean,  
Had this weak arm the highest power of vengeance,  
To stain my native land with civil slaughter?  
No, Heaven forefend! nor should a danger reach  
My sovereign's sacred life. Were there a wretch  
Accurs'd enough to raise his trait'rous arm  
'Gainst Henry's breast, Clifford would rush between,  
Oppose himself to the assassin's point,  
And glory in the death that sav'd his king.

*Sal.* My mind's at peace.

*Cliff.* So rest it, noble Salisbury!  
Shall I be plain, and tell thee all my weakness?  
'Spite of ungrateful Henry's perfidy,  
I love him still, I love this royal robber.  
In early youth I led him to the field,  
Train'd his advent'rous spirit, shar'd his dangers,

And by his side maintain'd my country's honour,  
In many a gallant feat; Oh, hard return!  
How hath he paid this love!

*Sal.* When headlong passions  
Mislead him not from his instinctive greatness,  
How noble shews he! wisdom, learning, policy,  
Inform his mind, and gen'rous honour sways it.

*Cliff.* Where was it fled, that guardian of man's heart,  
When, with insidious arts, in evil hour,  
He lur'd my chaste, my duteous Rosamond  
From virtue and obedience? Was she not  
All that a parent's fondest wish could form?  
In vain her modest grace and diffidence  
Bore the dear semblance of her mother's sweetness,  
And promis'd an unsullied length of days.  
She's lost, and the bright glories of our line  
Are stain'd in her disgrace.

*Sal.* The love of goodness  
Not wholly leaves the breast that error stains,  
But oft abides, a wholesome monitor,  
To call the miserable culprit back  
To its forsaken laws. So may it fare  
With her. 'Tis true the king, when in her sight,  
Engrosses all her thoughts; but, in her secret  
And solitary hours, sad she regrets  
Her ruin'd innocence, and mourns that love  
Which led her to destroy a father's peace,  
And stain the honours of a spotless line.

*Cliff.* To save her from a deeper plunge in guilt  
Is all my present purpose; 'gainst the king,  
No other weapon do I wish to use,  
But those which best become the manly heart,  
Reason and conscience; let him give her back



Stain'd and dishonour'd as the mourner is,  
Let him restore her to these aged arms,  
I ask no more.

*Sal.* Unfold thy utmost wish,  
And if a friend's assistance may avail,  
Command thy kinsman's warmest services.

*Cliff.* Conceal my being here; let not the king—  
Know Clifford treads these bounds; he must be won  
To my discourse, unconscious who I am.  
I have devis'd a means—enquire not now,  
But patient aid me, and await the issue.  
I have good hopes that all the gen'rous fires,  
Which warm'd his noble heart, are not extinct;  
If so, I may once more embrace my child,  
My still dear Rosamond.—Blame not my weakness,  
I come not to inflict but banish pain;  
T' awaken in her breast a just remorse  
For her past failings; and entice her steps  
To some serene abode, where penitence  
And contemplation dwell, and jointly soothe  
The contrite sinner's mind, with glowing hope  
Of Heaven's indulgence, and returning peace. [*Exeunt.*

---

SCENE II.

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*A retir'd Grove belonging to the Palace. Enter Prince HENRY  
and LEICESTER.*

*Prince.* My spirit will not brook it! What avails  
The empty name and title of a king,  
Without imperial pow'r? why with his son  
Divide his throne, unless he meant to grant  
A share of that supreme authority,

Which only lends stability to greatness  
 And gives its highest lustre?—to be caught  
 With the gay tinsell'd garb of royalty,  
 Befits an ideot only; let him know  
 That Henry's son inherits Henry's pride,  
 And may in time, with daring hand, assume,  
 What now he is debarr'd.

*Leic.* Your wrongs are great;  
 But be not too precipitate and rash,  
 Lest you therein defeat the means by which  
 You wish to gain. Beware, the watchful eye  
 Of curiosity besets our paths;  
 Speak not so loud.

*Prince.* What danger? Shou'd the king  
 Himself o'er-hear, confront me face to face,  
 I would not shrink; mine eye should not abate  
 Its angry fire, nor my sunk heart recall  
 The smallest drop of that indignant blood  
 That paints my glowing cheek; but I would speak,  
 Avow, proclaim, and boast my settled purpose.  
 I have a double cause to urge me on,  
 A royal mother's wrongs join'd to my own.  
 Do I not see her injur'd, scorn'd, abandon'd,  
 For the loose pleasures of a wanton's bed,  
 His beauteous minion, whom embower'd he keeps  
 In Woodstock's mazy walks? Shall he do this  
 Unnotic'd, unapproach'd, yet dare to check  
 My honest ardour? He hath yet to learn,  
 That parent who expects his son to walk  
 Within the decent pale of rigid duty,  
 Should keep a heedful watch o'er his own steps,  
 And by his practice well enforce the doctrine  
 He means to have him learn.

*Leic.* Yet check this passion,  
And hear the dictates of my cooler mind.  
Is not the council here conven'd this morn,  
By Henry's order, to debate the courtesy  
Of the French monarch, who even now invites  
Thy royal presence to his gallant court,  
On friendly visit ?

*Prince.* Yes—and here the partner  
In England's throne waits, till their mighty wisdoms  
Shall have determined what his course must be,  
And deign to call him in ; waits like a servile  
And needy pensioner, that asks a boon.

*Leic.* Again you lapse into this wild extreme.  
Forget a while ambition and revenge,  
And court cool wisdom ; act the politician ;  
Play to their humours, yield to their decrees ;  
Use this French journey, as the happy step  
To mount to your desires.—Tho' here depriv'd  
Of Pow'r, in Normandy your half-king title  
Enables you to scatter favours round,  
Such as shall gain you popular applause,  
And win your subjects' hearts—This point obtain'd,  
All you can ask is yours ; you may command  
Where now you sue, and Henry's self may fear  
Your potency, and grant your highest wish.

*Prince.* By Heav'n thou hast inflam'd my eager soul  
With bright imaginations of renown,  
Of conquest and ambition ; I a while  
Will try to sooth this proudly-swelling heart,  
Into mild heavings, and submissive calms,  
For this great purpose.

*Leic.* To your aims devoted,  
I'll privily away, and meet you there ;

An unbecoming lesson ; let the cause,  
The noble motive, consecrate the means.  
Remember, Eleanor, thou fall'st a-while,  
To rise more glorious ; to record thy name  
Amid the fairest legends of renown,  
A brave avenger of thy sex's wrongs.

[Exit.

*Abb.* Go,—shallow woman thy impatient soul,  
That mounts to frenzy at each slight surmise  
Of injury, makes thee a precious tool  
For deep-laid policy to work withal.  
The prince must here abide—his tow'ring pride,  
And Leicester's hot and enterprising genius,  
Assisted by my subtle aid, may raise  
A storm that shall destroy this haughty king,  
This poison to our cause and holy order.  
Henry, thou know'st not what a foe thou hast  
In this un-mitigable breast—my soul  
Abhors thee, and will never know repose,  
Till thou hast fall'n a victim to my rage.  
The greatest, noblest cause inspires my deeds!  
Look down, oh, sainted Becket! with delight,  
On thy true servant! let thy blessed spirit  
Assist my purpose, while I seek revenge  
On him who dar'd insult our holy faith,  
By instigating sacrilegious hands  
With thy dear blood to stain our hallow'd shrines.

[Exit.

ACT II. SCENE I.

*An Apartment in the Palace. Enter the KING and VERULAM.*

*King.*

TRUE, Verulam, and it must be thy care  
To check this growing pride, which mounts so fast,  
And, like the forward sapling, boldly strives  
To emulate the lofty cedar's height,  
Which long hath tower'd in unrivall'd strength,  
The glory of the world.

*Ver.* That zeal and love,

Which hitherto hath won my master's confidence,  
Long as the life-blood warms this aged heart,  
Shall be employed to serve him; but this asks  
The nicest caution; soft advice must sooth  
His headstrong spirit, that, on the least surmise  
Of an usurp'd authority, would start  
Aside, indignant of controul.

*King.* To thee,

Thy love and prudence, we confide the whole:  
Thy polish'd sense, thy knowledge of mankind,  
And long experience, render thee most fit  
For this great task.

*Ver.* The time of his departure,  
Is it yet fix'd?

*King.* On our decree alone

That point depends; he shall with speed away;  
These rude commotions, that assail us round,  
May call us from our realm; should it prove so,  
He must not here remain; his stay were fatal.

*Ver.* Not so, I hope, my liege.



*King.* Prudence enjoins  
Our strictest caution. What his own ambition  
Might of itself attempt, we cannot say ;  
But there's a farther danger to be fear'd.

*Ver.* His virtues will defend him from such deeds,  
As honour and obedience must alike  
Condemn ; and he has virtues which, I trust,  
Will cast a lustre o'er his rising years,  
When the slight indiscretions of his youth  
Are buried in oblivion.

*King.* I trust so too.  
Yet, Verulam, where splendid virtues grow  
Great errors also shoot ; his time of life  
Is now in that capricious, wavering state,  
When the soft bosom is susceptible  
Of ev'ry new impression ; his colleague,  
(From whom we wish him sunder'd) subtle Leicester,  
Is ever at his ear, watchful to seize  
Th' unguarded moment of the youthful heart,  
When dark insinuations may prevail  
Upon his ductile mind. Be thou in readiness,  
On our first notice.

*Ver.* This important point,  
Which waited only, what this morn hath given,  
The council's sanction, hath been long debated.  
I am prepar'd, my liege.

*King.* Behold our son !

*Enter the PRINCE.*

Henry, the council, zealous for thy welfare,  
The ripe improvement of thy growing virtues,  
And the successive glories of our line,  
Have by their voices sanctified our will,

In thy departure hence. Go, reap that profit  
Which the discerning and ingenious mind  
Gains from new climes ; that knowledge of the world,  
Of laws, of customs, policy, and states,  
Which observation yields alone, and books  
And learned guides imperfectly convey.

*Prince.* I thank my father's love ; the council wisely  
Bend to thy will ; they but allot what else  
Had been demanded by the future heir  
And present partner in th' imperial seat.  
My glowing youth and kindling spirit scorn  
To live coop'd up within one scanty bound :  
Would life permit, it were delight to trace  
Each scepter'd region of the peopled world ;  
To mark, compare, define their various modes,  
And glean the wisdom that results from all.

*King.* Blest in th' inheritance of England's throne,  
This ardour well befits thee. Go, my Henry,  
Visit our brother France ; there shine a star  
Of this rich diadem ; let the bright dawn  
Of thy young virtues glitter in their eyes ;  
Those virtues which shall grace this glorious isle,  
When we are low in dust.

*Prince.* And shew a heart  
Prepar'd to vindicate each royal due  
With the last drop that warms its swelling veins.

*King.* Spoke with a free-born spirit—Yet beware,  
Be not impetuous to grasp at power,  
Nor use it, when obtained, beyond the limits  
Of reason and uprightness ; in the monarch  
Do not forget the man. This honest lord,  
An able counsellor and steady friend,  
We make companion of thy expedition ;

Will worm myself into each Norman breast;  
 Pour in their greedy ears your early virtues,  
 Your love of them, their interest and honour;  
 Then join in any hardy enterprise  
 That fore-thought can suggest, and win the palm,  
 Or die beside thee.

*Prince.* Generous, gallant friend!  
 I have not words to thank thee—to my breast  
 Let me receive the guardian of my glory,  
 In full assurance that his noble friendship  
 Shall never be forgot.

*Leic.* Behold, the queen——  
 She moves this way.

*Prince.* I will retire a-while;  
 I would not meet her, till this hop'd departure  
 Be fix'd irrevocably, lest her fond  
 Maternal love and softness might prevail  
 O'er that instinctive yielding in the breast,  
 Which nature wakens when a mother sues,  
 And win some promise from my pliant heart,  
 That I should scorn to break,

[*Exit.*

*Leic.* What if I try  
 To win her to our cause? The frequent wrongs,  
 Which fire her haughty mind, join'd to affection  
 For her young Henry, may engage her help  
 In any scheme that promises revenge;  
 But soft—the present is no time for that:  
 For with her comes that busy meddling abbot,  
 That dealer in dark wiles, who rules and guides  
 The consciences of all who weakly crouch  
 To his mock-sanctity. I will avoid him—  
 Even now some mischief broods within his mind!  
 Perhaps tow'rd me; for he, of late, hath shewn me

Marks of respect and courtesy, wherein  
He was not wont to deal. Time only will  
Explain the object of his present aims,  
For in his proteus-face, or even his words,  
No smallest trace of what employs his thoughts  
Can ever be descry'd.

[Exit.

*Enter QUEEN and ABBOT,*

*Queen.* Tell me no more  
Of long-protracted schemes and tedious wiles;  
My soul is all impatience: Talk to me  
Of vengeance, speedy vengeance.

*Abb.* What can be  
Devis'd to punish, pain, and mortify,  
Beyond what is enjoin'd on Henry's head?  
Though distant from the venerable shrine  
Where martyr'd Becket's sacred blood was spill'd,  
Is he exempt from penance? Doth not here  
Our careful mother-church pursue her foe?  
Is he not nightly doom'd to tread the lone  
And solemn isles of Ida's holy house,  
In deep atonement for the barb'rous fall  
Of that dear murder'd saint?

*Queen.* And what atones  
For Eleanor's loud wrongs, her murder'd peace?  
Will all the penances e'er yet devis'd  
By dronish priests, relieve my tortur'd heart?  
Will they recall my Henry's truant love,  
Or blast the charms of that deluding witch,  
Who lures him from me? This is the redress  
Which Eleanor demands—this the revenge  
Alone, which she can condescend to take.

*Abb.* Nor is this past my hope to purchase for you;

My thoughts, devote to you and your repose,  
Continually labour for your good.

Alas! you know not, mighty queen, the sighs  
My heart has heav'd, the tears mine eyes have shed,  
For your injurious treatment; and, even now,  
Would you but bid your just resentment cool,  
I think the wish'd occasion is at hand,  
That gratifies your most enlarg'd desire.

*Queen.* Thy words are balsam to my wounded peace.  
Go on, go on; dwell on this pleasing strain,  
And I will worship thee.

*Abb.* Is not the council  
Conven'd by Henry? Do they not decree  
Your darling son shall strait for France?

*Queen.* Ay, there  
Again is England's queen insulted, mock'd—  
Have I no right of choice? shall the dear boy,  
Whose noble spirit feels his mother's wrongs,  
Shall he be banish'd from me, torn away,  
My only comforter?

*Abb.* He must not go.  
You must prevent it—practise every art;  
Nay, bid your pride and fierce resentment bend  
To soft request and humblest supplication,  
Ere suffer his departure.

*Queen.* Tell me, father,  
How this is to be done. Canst thou speak peace  
To the tumultuous bosom of the deep,  
When the loud tempest tears it? can I meet  
With patient meekness my oppressors' sight?  
Wear an apparent calmness in my face,  
While heaving anguish struggles in my mind?  
It will not be.



*Abb.* There are no other means.

What though the council urge state-policy,  
And public-good, for their consent herein,  
Their inward aim is to oblige the king,  
Who labours this great point. And what's his drift?  
No courteous scheme, to please his brother France;  
But merely to remove the gallant prince.

*Queen.* Say'st thou?

*Abb.* He fears a rival in the hearts  
Of discontented subjects; the brave youth,  
With speech undaunted, that disdains disguise,  
Hath freely spoke your wrongs: hence jealousy  
Broods in the king, lest your aspiring son  
May prove, in time, a bane to his pursuits,  
In wanton dalliance, and illicit love.

*Queen.* Is this the end of all his boasted care  
For my son's weal, his happiness and honour?  
This the great cause his brother France must see  
Th' all-praised heir of England's mighty throne?  
Oh, Henry! Whither is thy greatness fled?  
Is thy bold pride, thy majesty of heart,  
Sunk in low stratagems and mean deceits?  
So will it ever be, when perfidy  
Pollutes the soul; the sense of honour flies,  
And fraud and meanness fill the vacant seat.

*Abb.* Lose not the precious hours in useless reasonings;  
Speed to the presence; seize the first fair moment:  
Hang on his garment, clasp his stubborn knees;  
Foil art with art, and practise every means  
To win the king from this abhorr'd design.

*Queen.* I go; howe'er ill-suited to the task,  
I will essay it.—Stoop, exalted heart,  
A moment stoop; and, tongue, learn thou a new,

With the last drop that warms its swelling veins.

*King.* Spoke with a free-born spirit—Yet beware.

Be not impetuous to grasp at power,  
Nor use it, when obtain'd, beyond the limits  
Of reason and uprightness; in the monarch  
Do not forget the man. This honest lord,  
An able counsellor and steady friend,  
We make companion of thy expedition;  
Receive him, Henry, from thy father's hand,  
Worthy thy friendship, wear him near thy heart;  
And, should some hasty warmth mislead thy youth,  
e his white hairs the rev'rend monitor,  
To warn thee back to the neglected path,  
From which thy steps had stray'd.

*Prince.* I love his virtues,  
And thus receive the man my sire esteems.

[*Embraces Verulam.*]

*Enter the QUEEN.*

*Queen.* Must I then lose him? Is he not my son?  
Or has a mother's tongue no right to plead  
In her own sufferings? Oh, my lord, my Henry,  
Stand thou between thy wife, and the hard sentence  
Of men, who feel not the soft ties of nature,  
And give me back my boy.

*King.* Madam, forbear!  
Parental feelings in my bosom sway,  
Strong as in thine. Is he not lost alike  
To Henry as to Eleanor? Subdue  
This unbecoming weakness, that prefers  
Self-satisfaction to the public weal.  
He must away.

*Queen.* Alas! there was a time

When Henry's speech had falter'd o'er and o'er,  
Ere he had utter'd, with determin'd breath,  
So harsh a sentence. Is that time forgot?  
—Nay, turn not from me, Henry! doth thy heart  
Shame to avow the guests it harbour'd once,  
Fond love and gentle pity?

*Prince.* Cease, my mother,  
Oh, cease to interrupt my course of glory;  
I go but for a season, to return  
More worthy thy endearments.

*Queen.* Art thou, too,  
A traitor to my peace? And dost thou wish  
To fly a mother's arms? To leave her here,  
Helpless and unprotected! Oh, my son!  
Oppose not thou my wish, but rather join  
To melt a father's heart.

*King.* 'Twere useless, madam;  
Think who thy husband is, and what his ties.  
How light, how wavering must he appear  
In public eyes, should he abjure the point  
He hath just labour'd! Recollect thyself—  
Thou canst not wish him so to slight the claims  
Of wisdom and of honour.

*Queen.* Nor the claims,  
The soft'ning duties of domestic life;  
The claims of happiness, of inward peace,  
Which long my heart hath sigh'd for.

*King.* Eleanor,  
Once more, remember who we are; a king,  
That will not brook to be arraign'd and school'd  
For petty indiscretions; Henry judges  
His own mis-doings, and the chastisement  
Must be inflicted by his conscious mind,  
Not the bold railings of another's tongue.

*Queen.* I will be mild, be patient, be advis'd ;  
I do recall my words, revoke each free,  
Each hasty breath of my unguarded speech,  
Which hath offended thee ; henceforth I bend  
My temper to thy will, thy nicest wish,  
So I may keep my son.

*King.* No more—thou askest  
What cannot be.

*Queen.* Thus lowly on my knee  
Will I turn suppliant for him.

*King.* Oh, forbear !  
That posture ill becomes us both. I grieve  
Thou shouldst be so importunate, for what  
We must not, cannot, will not grant.

*Queen.* For this  
Have I debas'd myself ? Hath England's queen  
Bent lowly to the earth, to be denied  
A suit, the mother had a right to claim ?  
My heart swells high, indignant of the meanness,  
And scorns itself for such servility.

*King.* Prefer a proper suit, thou canst not ask  
What Henry shall refuse.

*Queen.* Oh no ! Thy grants,  
Thy kind consenting smiles, thy soothing accents,  
Thy love, thy faith, are all withdrawn from Eleanor,  
And given to another ; conscious shame  
O'er-pow'rs me, while I own they once were dear :  
But I will now forget them, rase them out  
From my officious mem'ry, which hath dar'd  
To call them back to my insulted heart.

*King.* Well doth this railing, which thy fury promis'd,  
Warn us to part ; our kindness meant to give  
Some days indulgence to the mother's feelings.

*Queen.* I scorn both that and thee.

*Prince.* [*Aside.*] My bosom swells,  
Impatient of her wrongs—down, down, a while,  
The time—the time will come—

*King.* Lord Verulam,  
Prepare thee, on the instant; he shall hence  
Before yon sun decline. If thou hast aught  
Of love or duty for thy mother's ear,  
Thou hast free licence, Henry, to employ  
The present moments in that pious office;  
Yet take good heed—let not a woman's weakness  
Melt thy resolves, and tempt thee to forget  
The debt thou ow'st thy country and thy king.

[*Exit with Verulam.*]

*Prince.* Restrain those precious drops, my dearest mother,  
That trembling stand in thy swoll'n eyes, and shew  
Like the full bubblings on the fountain's brim,  
Pressing to pass their bounds; abate this grief,  
And bid thy bosom rest.

*Queen.* If thou behold'st  
One tear disgrace mine eye, fierce indignation,  
Not grief, hath call'd it forth—away, away—  
Seem not solicitous about a cause  
That pains thee not; thou art no more a son,  
No more a comfort to thy mother's woe.

*Prince.* Oh, by the hopes I have of future fame,  
I do not merit these ungentle terms.  
Revoke thy words—resume those gentle strains,  
Which wont to fall upon thy Henry's ear,  
And nature's feelings will unsluice my heart  
In blood to thy complainings.

*Queen.* Art not thou  
Join'd with the rest, a foe to my repose?



See'st thou not how thy mother is neglected,  
Abandon'd, scorn'd? Yet thou canst yield obedience  
To the decrees of him who thus insults me,  
And leave me to my wrongs.

*Prince.* Can I oppose  
A parent's absolute command? Oh, madam!  
Think on my state, how critically nice;  
'Twixt two such urgent claims, how hard to judge!  
I must resist a king and father's power,  
Or seem neglectful of a mother's woes.  
Judge me not so; even while I own the strength  
Of this imperial mandate, and prepare  
To speed for France, I feel for your afflictions,  
Lament your helpless state, and could, with joy,  
Yield up my life, to save you from disgrace.

*Queen.* There spoke my son again! Oh, my dear Henry!  
If thy soul's truth confirms these precious words,  
(And that it does, I trust that starting tear)  
Reflect what further must betide my life,  
What future hoards of misery and shame  
Fate hath to pour upon my wretched head.  
My share in the imperial seat, my life  
Even now, perchance, is doubtful; all ills threaten;  
And when the mighty measure is complete,  
When every breast, but thine, is callous tow'rd me,  
Must I call out in vain for my defender?  
Or must I yield my spirit to my wrongs,  
And poorly die beneath them?

*Prince.* Ere the hour  
Arrive, that should behold that dire event,  
I would myself redress thee, would excite  
My Norman subjects in thy just defence;  
Would head them, and oppose my vengeful sword

To each oppressive breast (save one alone)  
To vindicate thy rights.

*Enter VERULAM.*

*Ver.* The king, my Lord,  
Expects you.

*Prince.* I attend him strait.

[*Exit Verulam.*

*Queen.* This haste  
Hath malice in it.

*Prince.* Heed it not, my mother;  
This journey (if my guess deceive me not)  
Shall be the source of good; and on thy head  
May all that good descend! Be death my lot,  
So I give peace to thee!

*Queen.* I will not shame  
Thy noble spirit with weak wom'nish tears,  
Or one disgraceful sigh. Wilt thou remember  
Thy mother's wrongs?

*Prince.* I will.

*Queen.* Adieu, begone;  
Glory and bliss be thine! This gallant boy  
(So my prophetic mind forebodes) shall prove  
My great avenger, and oppression's scourge.  
Perfidious Henry! thou impell'st my soul  
To these extremes; thou mak'st me what I am.  
Hadst thou continu'd, what I knew thee once,  
Endearing, tender, fond—but hence the thought!  
Let me shun that, lest my great heart recoil,  
And shrink inglorious from its mighty task.  
Why comes he not? This abbot! Oh, 'tis well.

[*Exit Prince.*

*Enter the ABBOT.*

Where are thy councils now? Thy subtle schemes?  
All weak and un-availing—I am lost;

Sunk in my own esteem ; have meanly bent  
Beneath injurious Henry's lordly pride,  
And heard my prayers rejected.

*Abb.* Hapless queen !

Thy wrongs, indeed, cry loud,

*Queen.* My son's torn from me.

*Abb.* I've heard it all.

*Queen.* And sat inactive down,  
To wait the slow events of time and chance !

*Abb.* Misdeem me not, great queen ; I have revolv'd  
Each circumstance with nicest scrutiny ;  
Ev'n from this journey, which we wish'd to thwart,  
Much good may be deriv'd ; if the prince breathe  
The spirit of his mother——

*Queen.* Peace ! my policy  
Hath flown before thee there ; I have explor'd  
His active spirit ; found him what I hop'd :  
For me he sallies forth ; for me returns,  
To vindicate my rights.

*Abb.* As we could wish ;  
And a sharp spur, to forward his designs  
In any daring enterprize, is Leicester.  
By secret emissaries I have learn'd,  
Within this hour, that warm, ambitious friend  
Withdraws from court, and speeds to join the prince  
In Normandy.

*Queen.* But what avail these views,  
Of distant vengeance, to my present pangs ?  
Here I endure the bitterness of woe,  
While my curst rival, bane of all my joys,  
Dwells in tranquility and soft content ;  
In placid ease, within her fairy-bower,  
Enjoys my Henry's smiles, his fond endearments,  
And vows of love—Ah ! due to me alone !

*Abb.* That dream shall vanish quickly.

*Queen.* Say'st thou, father?

*Abb.* This very evening, my religious function  
Demands me at the fair-one's bower.

*Queen.* The fiend's—

*Abb.* To thy sole use the time shall be employ'd,  
I will awaken in her tim'rous mind  
The dangers of her state; load her with scruples;  
Then work her temper to some dang'rous scheme,  
That shall undo her favour with the king.

*Queen.* Its nature——speak——

*Abb.* Tax me not, gracious mistress,  
To farther explanation—Let me have  
The triumph and delight to pour at once  
My subtle scheme, and its desir'd success,  
In thy enraptur'd ear.

*Queen.* Enough—go on,  
And give me this great comfort; let me hear  
'The sorceress is sundered from his arms.  
Work me this miracle—renown, and wealth,  
Unbounded power, and royal patronage  
Shall be thy great reward.

[Exit.

*Abb.* For wealth and power  
I on myself alone depend—vain dreamer!  
Who weakly canst suppose I toil for thee.  
No, I have further, higher views, beyond  
Thy feeble stretch;—the supple Rosamond  
Shall prove a greater bane to thy repose,  
Than thou divin'st; her will I instigate,  
With her soft blandishments and witching phrase,  
To practice on her lover, till she lure him  
To cast thee from thy regal dignities,  
Divorce thee from his bed and throne; that done,

Th' enchantress rises to the vacant seat;  
Thus one great point of my desire is gain'd;  
Power uncontroulable awaits my nod:  
This gewgaw, dazzl'd with her pomp, shall  
Rule the king, and I rule all, by ruling her.

[Exit.

SCENE II.

*Changes to a Cloister. Enter CLIFFORD, dressed as an Abbot.*

*Cliff.* Thou garb, for holy purposes design'd,  
Assist my honest artifice; conceal  
My aged form from recollection's trace,  
And be my passport to my mourning child,  
I'll hallow thee with gratitude and tears.  
This is the awful hour, if right I learn,  
When in these solemn isles the royal Henry  
Treads, pilgrim-like, these flints, and pours his soul  
In sighs for murder'd Becket—where, alas!  
Where are the deep laments, the bitter tears,  
Which he should shed for Clifford's ruin'd peace!  
He comes, the great disturber of my breast,  
Ev'n noble in his guilt!—my heart avows  
The fond affection that I bore his youth,  
And melts within me.—Let me shun his sight  
A moment, to retrieve my sinking spirit.

[Retires.

*Enter the KING, as a Pilgrim.*

*King.* Must it be ever thus? still doom'd to tread  
This sullen course, and for a bitter foe?  
Becket, tho' in his grave, torments me still.  
And what avails it him, who sleeps unconscious  
Of my forc'd penance? Heart, resume thy strength



Rouse thee! resist the bigot imposition,  
And be thyself again.

*Cliff.* Who thus vents forth  
His sore disquiets?

[*Advancing.*

*King.* What is he who asks?  
If yon expiring lamp deceive me not,  
Thy garb betokens a religious function.

*Cliff.* Thou judgest well.

*King.* Inform me, holy guide,  
What boot the punishments your laws enjoin;  
Self-castigation, balmy sleep renounc'd,  
And lonely wand'rings o'er the rugged flint,  
Through the long-cloister'd isle?

*Cliff.* Much, pious stranger,  
Much they avail: within these silent walls  
Chaste contemplation dwells; this hallow'd gloom  
Inspires religious musings, ardent prayer,  
Which, by their fervid impulse, waft the soul  
Of erring man, above this vale of weakness,  
And teach him to regain, by heavenly aid,  
What he had forfeited by human frailty.

*King.* Divinely spoke! but well may'st thou declaim  
On their utility, who ne'er hast felt  
Their harsh severities—Thou haply canst  
Produce the legend of a life unstain'd.

*Cliff.* No—would to Heaven I had that boast; but rank'd  
'Mongst error's sons, I share the general weakness;  
Too numerous are my faults; but one, alas!  
Beyond the rest I mourn—Spare me a moment,  
While I give respite to my swelling grief.

*King.* Methinks thou hast involv'd me in a share  
Of thy distress. For what art thou enjoin'd  
This rigid duty, similar to mine?  
Who hath inflicted it?

*Cliff.* Myself—my conscience.

*King.* Thyself!

*Cliff.* The mind that feels its own demerits,  
Needs no infliction from another's tongue.

*King.* My ears, my soul, are open to thy words—  
Give me to know thy crime.

*Cliff.* How can I utter it,  
And not sink down with shame?

*King.* Let shame betide  
The coward heart that will not own its frailties;  
If there's a grace in man superior far  
To all beside, it must be that true pride,  
That bids him speak his own misdeeds. Proceed.

*Cliff.* I had a friend—the darling of my soul—  
He lov'd, he honoured me—the trade of war  
He taught my youth; in many a hardy field  
Have we together fought, asserted England's  
And noble Henry's fame, Henry, the greatest,  
The best of kings!—

*King.* Oh, painful recollection! [*Aside.*  
Thou once hadst such a friend, ungrateful Henry!

*Cliff.* A length of brotherhood we 'joy'd together,  
Till all its blessedness was spoil'd by me.  
He had a daughter, beauteous as the eye  
Of fancy ere imagin'd—

*King.* Spare me, spare me—  
Oh, bitter tale! thou hadst a daughter, Clifford! [*Aside.*

*Cliff.* I mark'd her for my own; pour'd the false tale  
Of wily love into her credulous ear,  
And won her artless heart.

*King.* Tumultuous pangs [*Aside.*  
Rush like a torrent thro' my bursting breast;—  
My crime, reflected by this stranger's tale,  
Glares frightful on me! Till this hour, I knew not

My trespass was so great—Oh, with what weak,  
 What partial eyes we view our own misdeeds!  
 The faults of others are a huge Olympus,  
 Our own an Emmet's nest.

*Cliff.* Heart, heart, be strong! [Aside.  
 He muses deeply on it—I have hurt [To the King.  
 Thy soft humanity, I fear.—Perchance  
 Thou hast a daughter, who, like this my victim,  
 Hath stray'd from virtue's path.

*King.* Away, Away—  
 I can endure no more—O conscience, conscience, [Aside.  
 With what a wild variety of torments  
 Thou rushest through my soul!—'Tis all distraction,  
 And asks some more than human strength of reason,  
 To save me from despair. [Exit.

*Cliff.* Kind Heaven, I thank thee;  
 His noble nature is not quite extinguish'd,  
 He's wounded deep—Oh! may he but retain  
 This sense of the sore pangs he brought on me,  
 Till I have rescu'd my repentant child,  
 And all my bus'ness in this life is done. [Exit.

### ACT III. SCENE I.

*An Apartment in the Bower. ROSAMOND discovered writing.  
 ETHELINDA attending.*

*Rosamond.*

IT is in vain—my trembling hands deny  
 Their wonted office—my distracted mind  
 Revolves a thousand projects to regain

Its vanish'd peace; yet all by turns evade  
 My feeble efforts: like the lucid vapours,  
 Which rise successive in a summer's sky,  
 And court our observation, yet are lost,  
 Ere fancy can assign them name or shape,  
 Lost in the wide expanse. Ah me! how weak,  
 How insufficient to its own desires,  
 Is the poor breast which honour hath deserted!

*Ethel.* Say, is it ought thy servant can discharge?  
 She wishes to relieve thy woe, and shares  
 Thy every pang.

*Ros.* Thy sympathizing heart  
 Hath oft consol'd me, soften'd the rude hour  
 Of bitter recollection, and repell'd  
 Encroaching agony—My Henry gave thee  
 A servant to my use; but thy mild nature,  
 So ill adapted to the lowly state  
 Wherein thy lot was cast, taught me to change  
 That servile title for the name of friend.

*Ethel.* Give me that office now, and let me speak  
 Thy meanings there.

*Ros.* I know not what I mean.  
 In vain, alas! she strives to please herself,  
 Who hath offended virtue. On that paper  
 I wish'd to pour my duty to my father,  
 Implore his dear forgiveness, beg one blessing,  
 Ere yet he sleep in peace—Oh, Rosamond!  
 Well hast thou spoke! for in the grave alone  
 Can Clifford rest.—Peace and repose on earth  
 Thine impious offences have deny'd him.  
 Ere this, perhaps, he is laid low in dust,  
 And his last hours were charg'd with grief and shame.

*Ethel.* Hope better, my fair mistress; raise thy thoughts  
From the dark musings of despondent woe,  
To these bright scenes of happiness and joy.

*Ros.* I have no title to them; these bright scenes  
May give delight to unpolluted breasts,  
But not to mine! The charmer, happiness,  
Hath long deserted me; with her lov'd mate,  
Seraphic innocence, she wing'd her flight,  
I fear, for ever.—This retir'd abode,  
Grac'd with each ornament inventive fancy  
Can furnish, to allure th' admiring eye,  
Serves but to sting me deeper with remorse;  
Upon my cheek imprint a stronger glow  
Of conscious shame, reflecting on the cause,  
The wretched cause, that brought me to their view.

*Ethel.* These are the dictates of deforming spleen,  
That to the low dejected mind presents  
False and disgustful objects. Henry's absence  
Is the sad source that casts this mournful gloom  
On all around: three days have now elaps'd  
Unmark'd by him and love; when he arrives,  
The bow'r, the groves, will wear a fairer aspect,  
And all be dress'd in beauty and delight.

*Ros.* 'Tis true, I try to wear the smile of joy  
In my dear conqueror's sight: nay, I do wear it;  
My heart acknowledges the soft delight  
His presence gives. Had I not lov'd too well,  
I had not been this wretch!—My soul doats on him!  
I live but in his looks. Why was he not  
By Fate ordain'd some rustic villager,  
And I the mistress of a neighbouring cot,  
That we had met as happy equals do,  
And liv'd in pleasures unallay'd by guilt!



*Ethel.* Yet to engage the dear, the tender hours,  
Which royal Henry spares from public toils;  
To call that heart your own, which all agree  
To love and honour; feast upon those smiles,  
Which millions sigh for ———

*Ros.* Cease, my Ethelinda;  
Thou know'st not how thy words afflict my breast,  
Think not, tho' fall'n from innocence, my mind  
Is callous to the feelings of humanity,  
Of truth, or justice. I reflect full oft,  
Ev'n in my happiest moments, there lives one  
Who has a right to Henry's every hour;  
Each tender vow, and each attractive smile;  
I know it, and condemn my feeble heart,  
For yielding to desires all moral laws  
Forbid, and in-born reason disapproves.

*Ethel.* You school yourself too harshly.

*Ros.* Oh, not so!

I have much more to bear. I have not yet  
Learn'd the great duty expiation claims:  
To part, my Ethelinda,

*Ethel.* Part! from whom?

*Ros.* From Henry—from the monarch of my heart;  
My wishes' Lord, my all of earthly bliss!  
Thou marvel'st at my words—but it must be;  
It is the sole atonement I can make  
To a fond father's woes, his injur'd fame,  
The tarnish'd glories of a noble line,  
The royal Eleanor's insulted rights,  
And my own conscious, self-arraigning heart.

*Ethel.* Oh! do not flatter that fond heart with hope  
Of such exertive power! Beneath the trial,  
Your strength would fail, your resolution droop;

You could not yield him up.

*Ros.* By my warm hopes  
Of mild remission to my great offences,  
I feel my bosom equal to the task,  
Hard as it is; so Henry left me not  
In anger or unkindness, but resign'd me,  
With the dear care of a protecting friend,  
To the soft paths of penitence and peace,  
I would embrace the torment it entail'd,  
And bless him for each pang.

*Ethel.* Behold, he comes!

[*Exit.*

*Enter the KING.*

*King.* My Rosamond! my ever-new delight!  
Receive me to thy arms, enfold me there,  
Where ever-blooming sweets perpetual rise,  
And lull my cares to rest.

*Ros.* It was not thus  
My Henry us'd to visit this retreat;  
Bright cheerfulness was wont to dance around him,  
Complacent sweetness sat upon his brow,  
And soft content beam'd lovely from his eye.

*King.* Well thou reprov'st me; I will strive to chase  
The gloomy cloud, that overhangs my spirit,  
Th' effect of public business, public cares.  
(My tell-tale looks, I fear, will speak the pain  
My heart still suffers, from that stranger's converse.) [Aside.  
Oft do I mourn the duties of my station,  
That call my thoughts to them, and claim the hours,  
Which I would dedicate to love and thee.

*Ros.* I meant not to reproach thee; 't was my zeal,  
For the dear quiet of thy mind, that spoke.  
I cannot see the slightest shade of grief

Dim the bright lustre of thy cheering eye,  
But apprehension pains me, lest for me  
Thy glory be diminish'd to the world.

*King.* I seek not empty popular acclaims;  
Thy tender accents falling on mine ear,  
Like rural warblings on the panting breeze,  
Convey more rapture, more supreme delight,  
Than Io-Pæans of a shouting world.

*Ros.* To see bright satisfaction glow within  
Thy manly cheek, behold the rising smile,  
And hear thee speak the gladness of thy heart,  
Is my best joy, my triumph, and my pride;  
And yet, my Henry, ought it to be so?  
Still should I listen to the Syren, pleasure,  
While awful Virtue lifts her sober voice,  
And warns my heart of her neglected precepts?

*King.* Forbear, forbear these soft complaints, and speak  
Of rapture; speak of my improving ardour,  
And thy unceasing love.

*Ros.* Oh! thou divin'st not  
How many heavy hours, and sleepless nights,  
Thy Rose endures! how much my faulty state  
(Bless'd as I am in thee) arraigns my mind;  
Oft in the bitter hours, when thou art absent,  
My father's image rises to my view,  
Array'd in gloomy grief, and stern reproof.  
Nay, do not eye me with that melting fondness;  
Hast thou not often bade me cast my cares  
On thee, and told me, thou would'st bear them for me?  
Hear then, oh, hear me! for to whom but thee  
Can I unload my heart?

*King.* Oh, speak not thus.  
Should these sad accents stain the precious moments,

When Henry flies from a tumultuous world  
To tranquil joys, to happiness and thee?  
What busy fiend, invidious to our loves,  
Torments thy gentle breast?

*Ros.* Trust me, my Henry,  
This is no sudden gust of wayward temper,  
'Tis reason's impulse: oft hath my heart endur'd  
Afflictive pangs, when my unclouded face  
Hath worn a forc'd and temporary smile,  
Because I would not hurt thy noble mind.  
Advancing time but multiplies my torments,  
And gives them double strength; they will have vent,  
Oh! my protector, make one glorious effort  
Worthy thyself—remove me from thy arms;  
Yield me to solitude's repentant shade.

*King.* Renounce thee, did'st thou say? my Rosamond!  
Were those the words of her and love?

*Ros.* They were;  
It is my love intreats; that love which owns  
Thee for its first, its last, its only lord.  
Allow me to indulge it, undisturb'd  
By the sore miseries which now surround me,  
Without the sense of guilt, that fiend who waits  
On all my actions, on my every thought.

*King.* By Heaven, I never knew distress till now!  
Thy accents cleave my soul; thou dost not know  
What complicated agonies and pangs  
Thy cruelty prepares for Henry's heart!  
He must endure a throe, like that which rends  
The seated earth, ere he can summon strength  
To banish thee for ever from his arms.

*Ros.* Think, Conscience; Honour, plead.

*King.* Down, busy fiend:

[*Aside.*]

That stranger's tale, and Clifford's crying wrongs,  
 Distract my tortur'd mind—in pity cease— [To Ros.  
 I cannot part with thee.

*Ros.* A thousand motives  
 Urge thy compliance—will not public claims  
 Soon call thee from thy realm? When thou art gone,  
 Who shall protect me? Who shall then provide  
 A safe asylum for thy Rosamond,  
 To guard her weakness from assailing fears,  
 And threat'ning dangers?

*King.* What can here alarm thee?

*Ros.* Perpetual apprehensions rise; perchance  
 The poignant sense, how much my crimes deserve,  
 Adds to the phantoms; Conscience-stung I dread  
 I know not what of ill. Remove me hence,  
 My dearest lord; thus on my knees I sue,  
 And my last breath shall bless thee. Give me misery,  
 But rescue me from guilt.

*King.* What, lead thee forth  
 From these once happy walls! yield thee, abandon'd,  
 To an unpitying, unprotecting world!  
 Then turn, and roam uncomfortably round  
 The chang'd abode, explore in vain the bliss  
 It once afforded; like a restless sprite  
 That hourly haunts the desolated spot  
 Where all his treasure lay! Bid me tear out  
 This seated heart, and rend each vital string,  
 I sooner could obey thee.

*Ros.* Turn, my Henry;  
 Leave me not thus in sorrow! Canst thou part  
 In anger from me?

*King.* Anger!—Oh, thou sweet one!  
 Witness these pangs!—I cannot, will not lose thee— [Going.



*Ros.* Confirm my pardon then ; pitying, reflect  
'Tis the first hour I e'er beheld thy frown.  
Forgive me—Oh, forgive me!

*King.* Spare me—spare  
A moment's thought to my distracted soul,  
To ease the throbs, and hush the swelling tumults,  
Which my fond love would fain conceal from thee,  
Thou exquisite tormentor! [Exit.

*Ros.* Heaven sooth thy suff'ring mind, restore thy peace,  
And win thy yielding spirit to my prayer!  
For it must be—the blow must be endur'd,  
Though nature tremble at it—Heaven requires it :  
I hear the sacred voice, that claims aloud  
Atonement for its violated laws.  
When I am sunder'd from him, ne'er again  
To feast my eyes on his lov'd form, or share  
His converse more, it will be then no sin,  
Nor Heav'n nor man can be offended then,  
If sometimes I devote a pensive hour  
To dwell upon his virtues ; or, at night,  
When sleep, like a false friend, denies his comfort,  
I bathe my solitary couch with tears,  
And weary Heaven for blessings on his head.

*Enter the ABBOT.*

*Abb.* Health to the fair, whose radiant charms diffus  
Bright beams around, and shame meridian day  
With rival lustre and superior beauty !

*Ros.* Alas, good father, my dejected heart,  
Ill-suited now to flattery's soothing breath,  
Is wrapp'd in other thoughts.

*Abb.* An old man's praise  
Is of small worth ; nor should'st thou term it flatt'ry

The approbation which the ready tongue  
 Spontaneous utters, at thy beauties' sight.  
 But thy sad eyes are swoln with tears, I trust  
 They flow from holy motives.

*Ros.* Thou hast oft  
 Preach'd, in persuasive accents, the great duty  
 Of combating temptation; teaching virtue  
 To gain dominion o'er assailing passions,  
 And with her pious firmness guard the breast.

*Abb.* I have, fair daughter.

*Ros.* These thy holy precepts,  
 My melancholy heart, I hope, hath learn'd;  
 The self-convicted mourner hath resolv'd  
 To turn from guilt's delusive dang'rous way,  
 And seek the penitential paths of peace.

*Abb.* Explain thyself, my pupil; lay meanings  
 Clear to my view.

*Ros.* I have resolv'd to leave  
 This culprit-state of unchaste, lawless love,  
 And, in some solitude's protecting shade,  
 Atone, by future purity of life,  
 My errors past.

*Abb.* 'Tis nobly purpos'd, daughter;  
 Worthy the precepts I have given thy youth,  
 And the great efforts of exalted virtue:  
 But why retire to moaping solitude?  
 The heart is weak that finds itself unable,  
 In any situation, to repent  
 Its past misdeeds; it is the principle,  
 And not the place, atones; we may be good,  
 And yet abide in active, cheerful life;  
 There are a thousand pleasures and delights  
 Not inconsistent with the strictest truth  
 And sanctity of mind.

*Ros.* It may be so,  
And such may be indulg'd, by those whose lives  
Have ne'er been branded with a flagrant crime;  
But wretches like myself, whom conscience taxes  
With violated chastity and justice,  
Have forfeited those rights.

*Abb.* I like not this—  
She dares debate—She judges for herself—  
I must restrain this freedom—'t is presumption. [Aside.

*Ros.* Yes, all shall be renounc'd, all that conspir'd  
To make my guilty situation wear  
The face of bliss; splendour and affluence,  
All shall be given up, and well exchang'd,  
If they obtain remission for my crimes.

*Abb.* Some farther meaning lurks beneath these words,  
Which my foreboding fears dislike. [Aside.

*Ros.* My Henry  
I have solicited to this great purpose,  
Of my new-open'd, new enkindled mind.

*Abb.* As I divin'd—Destruction to my views! [Aside.

*Ros.* Why turn'st thou from me? breathe thy pious comforts  
To nourish my resolves.

*Abb.* Think'st thou, fond pupil,  
Thy paramour will yield to thy request?  
Oh no! his passion is too much his master.  
Think'st thou, can he, who doats upon thy beauties,  
Doats even to folly—

*Ros.* Spare me, holy father—  
Wound not my ear with one contemptuous word  
Against his dignity: I cannot bear it.

*Abb.* My recollection, zealous for thy ease,  
Recalls the casual word. I grieve to see thee  
Misled by phantoms: but there is a way,

A clear and certain way, to happiness,  
Which thou hast not descry'd.

*Ros.* Inform me, father,  
How I may compass the religious ends  
My state demands, and my whole soul aspires to,  
Without disquieting my Henry's peace,  
And I will bless thee for it.

*Abb.* Love alone  
Confers true honour on the marriage state.  
Without this sanction of united hearts,  
The sacred bond of wedlock is defil'd,  
And all its holy purposes o'erthrown.

*Ros.* Be plain, good father.

*Abb.* Happiness should crown  
The altar's rites—and Henry sure deserves  
To be supremely happy—thou alone  
Canst make him so. Need I say more?

*Ros.* Speak on.  
Clear, unambiguous phrases best besit  
My simple sense.

*Abb.* His union with the queen  
Cannot be term'd a marriage; Heaven disdains  
The prostituted bond, where hourly jars  
Pervert the bless'd intent; thy vain retirement—  
What boots it Eleanor? who now retains  
The name alone of queen; or what avails  
The title of a wife? thou art th' espous'd  
Of his affections; let the church then shed  
Her holy sanction on your plighted loves;  
A pious duty calls, assert thy claim,  
Let thy fond lord divorce her from her state,  
And Rosamond shall mount the vacant throne.

*Ros.* Thy specious arguments delude me not;  
My soul revolts against them. Hence, I scorn

Thy further speech—Have I not crimes enough?  
Have I not amply injur'd Henry's wife.  
But I must further swell the guilty sum?  
Fly with thy wicked, thy pernicious schemes,  
To breasts whence every trace of good is banish'd.  
I am not yet so vile; 't was Henry's self  
I lov'd, not England's king; not for the wealth  
Of worlds, for all that grandeur can afford,  
The pride of dignity, the pomp of power,  
Nor even to fix my Henry mine alone,  
Will I advance one added step in sin,  
Or plant another torment in her breast,  
Whom too severely I have wrong'd already.

[Exit.

*Abb.* Bane to this coward heart, that shrunk beneath  
The peevish outrage of a frantic girl!  
The vain presumer sorely shall repent  
Her bold licentious pride, that dar'd oppose  
Her upstart insolence 'gainst my controul,  
Whose bidding should direct her ev'ry thought.  
Had she obey'd, the doating king perchance  
Had rais'd the painted moppet to his throne,  
And by that deed, had lost his people's love;  
A ready victim to the daring bands  
That threaten him around. That hope is lost—  
New schemes must be devis'd—all arts employ'd;  
For nothing shall appease my fierce resentment  
Till the foul wounds giv'n to our mitred saint,  
Be deep aveng'd in Henry's impious heart.

[Exit.



ACT IV. SCENE I.

*The Palace.*

*The ABBOT alone.*

It shall be so—the queen herself shall be  
My instrument of vengeance, both on Henry,  
And that audacious minion, who presum'd  
To disobey my dictates. This new project  
Cannot deceive my hopes: The haughty Eleanor,  
Fir'd by those demons, Jealousy and Anger,  
Will set no bounds to her outrageous will,  
And she hath suffer'd wrongs that might inflame  
A colder breast. But why recoils my heart  
At thought of harm to this presumptuous wanton?  
Why feel reluctant strugglings, as if virtue  
Check'd and condemn'd my purpose? 'Tis not harm;  
'Tis piety, 't is mercy.—Will she not  
Be taken from a life of sin and shame,  
And plac'd where she, at leisure, may repent  
Her great offences? This is giving her  
Her soul's desire.—But Eleanor, not I,  
Shall be the means. Night gathers round apace:  
Ascend, thick gloom, and with thy sable wings  
Veil Henry's peace for ever from his eyes!

*Enter the QUEEN.*

Hail, honour'd queen!

*Queen.* Art thou a comforter?

Thine order calls thee such; but thou approachest  
Unlike the messenger of gladsome tidings:

Delay is in thy step, and disappointment  
Sits on thy brow.

*Abb.* Oh, skillful in the lines,  
Which the mind pictures on th' obedient visage,  
To speak her inward workings!

*Queen.* Thy designs  
Have fail'd?

*Abb.* To thee I yield the palm of wisdom,  
Effective policy, and deep contrivance;  
To thee resign it all.

*Queen.* Lose not the moments  
In vain lamentings o'er mischances past:  
One project fail'd, another should be try'd,  
And former disappointments brace the mind  
For future efforts, and sublimer darings.

*Abb.* Thy noble spirit may perchance succeed  
Where all my arts have fail'd. I boast no power  
O'er this perverse, this self-directed wanton;  
She seems new fram'd—her gentle disposition,  
Which erst was passive to instruction's breath,  
As vernal buds to zephyr's soothing gale,  
Is banish'd from her breast; imperious tones  
Exalt her voice, and passion warms her cheek.

*Queen.* Whence can it spring, this new presumptuous change?  
Can she assume the port of arrogance?  
See, whose soft looks and hypocritic meekness  
Have won admiring eyes and pitying tongues,  
While I am tax'd with warm and wayward temper,  
For that I have not meanness to conceal  
A just resentment for atrocious wrongs,  
But bid them glow within my crimson cheek,  
And flash indignant from my threat'ning eye.

*Abb.* The lures of greatness, and ambition's baits,  
Are eagerly pursu'd by soaring minds :  
When first their splendour is display'd before them,  
Anticipating hope exalts their brightness,  
And fires the wretched gazer, ev'n to frenzy.

*Queen.* What hope—what greatness—what ambition ? Speak,  
Explain thy meaning, ease the gath'ring tumult  
That struggles here, and choaks me with its fullness.

*Abb.* I fear to speak.

*Queen.* Why fear ? Look on me well ;  
I am a woman with a hero's heart.  
Be quick—be plain—thou hast no tale t' unfold,  
Can make me shudder—though it make me feel.

*Abb.* Her wild imagination hurries her  
Beyond belief, or ev'n conception's limit ;  
Safely protected by the royal favour  
Of her great master (may I say his love ?)

*Queen.* On with thy speech—Dispatch !

*Abb.* She threats defiance  
To every other power, and all controul :  
Bids me, with haughty phrase, no more assume  
The right to check her deeds ; exalts herself  
Above the peers and worthies of the realm :  
Nay, frantic in her fancied excellence,  
Becomes the rival in imperial rule,  
And plumes herself on future majesty.

*Queen.* The traitress ! but thou err'st, it cannot be :  
Thou hast mista'en her words ; her coward heart  
Could not conceive such insolence of speech,  
Such arrogant presuming.

*Abb.* In effect

All was express'd, though not in open terms :  
Hearts so determin'd, rarely speak their meaning,

Lest just prevention intercept their purpose :  
But thus much, in the fullness of her passion,  
Fell from her lips : let her a while enjoy  
(These were her words) her transitory greatness !  
Anon the beam may take a different poise ;  
The mistress may become th' exalted wife,  
The haughty wife become th' abandon'd mistress.

*Queen.* Breath'd she those daring, those audacious accents,  
And doth the wretch survive it ? Be it so !  
She only lives to gratify my vengeance.  
Ere the vain dreamer mount her airy throne,  
She shall be taught the power of royalty  
O'er her own littleness, her pigmy pride.

*Abb.* You do not mean to see her ?

*Queen.* Yes—I do—

She thirsts for honour ; I will shew it her ;  
Will deign to set before her shrinking view  
Majestic Eleanor, th' exalted wife,  
And with a glance destroy her.

*Abb.* All you seek

May be obtain'd by this great condescension :  
Within your power, beneath your eye abash'd,  
Whelm'd with her crimes, and shrinking in her fears,  
She'll crouch to any terms ; bind her by oath  
No more to see your lord ; or, if you doubt  
The efficacy of that tie, remove her  
From the gay bower her infamy hath stain'd.  
Perform a holy work ; force her to quit  
The wanton course of her abandon'd life,  
And in some dim secure retreat, where you  
Alone command, conceal the sorceress  
For ever from the godlike Henry's eyes.

*Queen.* Oh, precious doctrine ! learned comforter !

Continue thus to counsel; leave my heart,  
My dauntless heart, to execute thy schemes.

*Abb.* When mean you—

*Queen.* Now; this night—my eager fury  
Brooks no delay—Thou must advise the hour.

*Abb.* About the season when imperial Henry  
Speeds to his midnight penance at the convent;  
I will with nicest caution watch the moments—

*Queen.* And be my guide?

*Abb.* Devoted to your bidding.

*Queen.* But soft—the means of our access—did not  
This grand apostate to his nuptial bond,  
Contrive some childish toy, some subtle clue,  
Without whose aid enquiry's foot in vain  
Attempts to find the wanton's close retreat?

*Abb.* He did; but that device is only practis'd  
When public duties call him from his realm;  
Then is the minion deep immur'd within  
The very heart of the obscure recess;  
But now that he with frequent eye o'erlooks  
And watches his cag'd turtle, she enjoys,  
Free range of the whole bower, by few attended,  
And none but who submissive yield obedience  
To our grave habit and religious order.

*Queen.* Enough, use wary watch—and hie with speed  
To my impatient soul. [Exit Abbot.]

Conceal her! yes,  
In that deep cavern, that eternal gloom,  
Where all her shames may be conceal'd—in death;  
Atonement less than this were insufficient  
To gratify my boundless thirst of vengeance.  
Long have they revell'd in the mighty pangs  
That rent my heart—'Tis now my turn to triumph.



When I behold the traitor sunk in grief,  
Plaining to her whose bosom will be cold  
To his distress, superior will I rise,  
Proudly exult in his severest pangs,  
Point at her lifeless coarse, for whom he scorn'd me,  
And loud exclaim in his afflicted ear,  
Behold the victim of despair and love.

[Exit.]

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SCENE II.

*An Apartment in the Bower.*

*Enter ROSAMOND with a Letter, and ETHELINDA.*

*Ros.* No Ethelinda—Never from that hour,  
That fatal hour when first I saw my hero,  
Saw him returning from the field of war,  
In manly beauty, flush'd with glorious conquest,  
Till our last grievous interview, did Henry  
Shew word or look ungentle—Nay, even now,  
Here in the full distraction of his soul,  
O'er his strong woes soft tenderness prevails,  
And all the softness of unbounded love.

*Ethel.* But what does he resolve?

*Ros.* There, Ethelinda,  
He gives me fresh disquiet; frenzy seems  
To guide his wayward pen; he talks of life  
As of a load he wishes to lay down,  
If I persist in my unnatural purpose,  
For such he terms it. Canst thou think, my Henry,  
I suffer not affliction great as thine?  
Yes, let the present tumults in my breast  
Be witness how I struggle with affection,

Stand up, and war with Nature's strongest power,  
In duty and religion's righteous cause.

*Ethel.* And must your gentleness abide such trials,  
Such hard extremity of wretchedness?  
Is here no middle course to steer?

*Ros.* Forbear!

Seek not to tempt me from that proper sense  
Of my deep faults, which only can sustain me  
In this sore trial; to remit my fervour,  
Were to be lost again.

*Ethel.* He'll ne'er consent  
To yield you up, resign you to your woe,  
Unfriended, unsustain'd, to heave alone  
The bitter sigh and pour th' unpitied tear.

*Ros.* He says he will return to me, and soon;  
Then paints the anguish of his bleeding heart  
In unconnected phrase and broken periods;  
Adjures me, by our loves, no more to urge  
The hard request on which his life depends.  
Oh, did I ever think I could refuse  
What Henry ask'd—But this—It must not be—  
Lend me thy arm, my friend, a sudden faintness  
Comes o'er me, and instinctive boadings whisper  
I shall not long survive my Henry's loss.

*Ethel.* Oh, chide them from you! at the sad idea  
My sorrows stream afresh.

*Ros.* Weep not for that,  
'Tis my best comfort. In the grave alone  
Can I find true repose, that quiet haven  
Whereto the wretched voyager in life,  
(Whose little helpless bark long time hath strove  
'Gainst the rude beatings of tumultuous guilt,)  
Of casts an ardent look, an eager wish,

To gain a shelter there from future storms.

*Ethel.* Let me conduct thee to the cheering breeze,  
Thy looks are pale.

*Ros.* Oh, thou, that art all mercy,  
Look down, indulgent, on the child of frailty;  
With pity view her errors, and instruct her  
How to obtain returning peace and pardon.

[*Kneels.*

[*Going.*

*Enter CLIFFORD, in his disguise.*

*Cliff.* Stay thee, fair mourner, wherefore dost thou shun  
The messenger of comfort?

*Ros.* Ethelinda!  
What voice was that? My startled fancy wakes  
New terrors! Yet it cannot be——

*Cliff.* My daughter!——

*Ros.* All gracious Heaven! 'tis he——

[*Faints.*

*Cliff.* Oh, let me clasp her  
To a fond father's aged breast, and call  
Her sinking spirit from the shades of death.

*Ethel.* Oh, reverend stranger, if thou be'st her father,  
With gentle voice allure her; do not cast  
The frown of anger on her meek distress;  
Her softness cannot bear it.

*Cliff.* Fear not, virgin!  
Assist to raise her—the returning blood  
Faintly renews its course! her timid eye  
Speaks painful apprehension.

*Ros.* Where is fled,  
That rev'rend form? Even now it hover'd o'er me,  
Sent by kind Heaven, the sacred delegate  
Of comfort and protection.

*Cliff.* Rosamond!——  
Nay! turn not from me—do not shun my sight,

In pity shrink not from a father's eye,  
Who comes to chace thy sorrows; comes to shed  
Some pious drops o'er thy afflicted heart,  
Ere he is mingled with the dust.

*Ros.* Thus lowly

Bent to the earth, with abject eye that dares not  
Look up to that much-injur'd rev'rend face,  
Let me implore thy pardon.

*Cliff.* Rise, my child,

Oh rise, and let me gaze on that lov'd form,  
Which once was all my comfort.—

*Ros.* But which now

You look upon with anger and disgust,  
My crimes deserve it all.

*Cliff.* Nay, meet my eye—

Survey me well: dost thou behold therein  
A rigid judge? Oh no, the father melts  
In these fast-streaming tears.

*Ros.* Has pitying Heaven

Heard the sad prayer of such a guilty wretch,  
And granted, in the moment of affliction,  
A parent's presence, and returning blessing,  
To his repentant child!

*Cliff.* Dost thou repent?—

And didst thou wish once more to see thy father?  
Dry up thy tears, and answer me with firmness;  
Dost thou repent?—Hast thou the fortitude  
To break the fatal tye, that link'd thy soul,  
To lawless love, and all its false allurements?  
Canst thou look up, with steady resolution,  
To that great Power who loves repentant hearts,  
And say thou wilt no more transgress?

*Ros.* I can,  
I can, my father; that all-seeing Power,  
To whom thou hast appeal'd, can witness for me,  
I have renounc'd the paths of sin and shame,  
And mean to spend my sad remains of life  
In deep contrition for my past offences.

*Cliff.* To find thee thus is rapture to my soul!  
Enter my breast, and take again possession  
Of all the fondness that I ever bore thee.—  
By my best hopes, when in thy smiling youth  
Mine eye hath hung enamour'd on thy charms,  
Thou shew'dst not then so lovelily as now,  
Dress'd in these graceful penitential tears.

*Ros.* Oh, my father!  
And may I still look up to thee with hope  
That the dear love and tenderness, thy breast  
Once cherish'd for thy darling Rosamond,  
Is not extinguish'd quite!

*Cliff.* Alas, my child!  
I am not lost to nature and her ties.  
We are all frail: preach stoicks how they will.  
'Tis not a parent's duty to cast off,  
But to reclaim, the wanderer of his blood.—  
One question more, on that depends my peace—  
Shall I behold my child redeem'd from shame,  
Or must I sink with sorrow to the grave,  
Ere this great business of my soul's accomplish'd?

*Ros.* Command my heart; can I, thus lost to goodness,  
Assuage thy cares, and soften the decline  
Of weary nature? say, my dearest father,  
And by the zeal of my obedience, prove  
The truth of my contrition.

*Cliff.* Hear me then,  
Thou darling of my bosom!—Westward hence,



On the slow rising of a fertile hill,  
A virtuous dame, of honourable race,  
Hath founded and endow'd a hallow'd mansion  
To pure devotion's purposes assign'd.  
No sound disturbs the quiet of the place,  
Save of the bleating flocks and lowing herds,  
And the meek murmurs of the trilling stream,  
That flows sweet-winding through the vale beneath ;

" No objects intercept the gazer's eye,  
" But the neat cots of neighb'ring villagers,  
" Whose lowly roofs afford a pleasing scene  
" Of modest resignation and content.

There piety, enamour'd of the spot,  
Resides ; there she inspires her holy fervour,  
Mild, not austere ; such piety, as looks  
With soft compassion upon human frailty,  
And soothes the pilgrim-sinner to embrace  
Repentant peace beneath her holy roof.—  
Say, wilt thou quit, for such serene delights,  
This gay abode of shame ?

*Ros.* I will, my father ;  
My wish invites to such a soft retreat.  
Oh, lead me forth !

*Cliff.* Thy words give added strength  
To my weak frame, and warm my languid blood.  
Some two hours hence, when midnight veils the globe,  
Disguis'd, as now, in this religious garb,  
Again expect me, to redeem thee hence,  
And guide thy steps to that abode of bliss——  
Here break we off——

*Ros.* Once more thy blessing on me,  
While I pour forth the silent gratitude  
Of my full soul for thy returning love.

[ *Kneeling.*

*Cliff.* Warm as thy soul can wish, my child, receive it.

[*Embracing her.*

Oh, the supreme delight 'twill be, to see thee  
Restor'd to holy peace and soft content,  
And sometimes share thy converse; then devote  
My lonely intervals to ceaseless prayer,  
That Heaven will pour on thy repentant heart  
Its healing mercy, and its promis'd grace!

[*Exit.*

*Ros.* Propitious Power, who chear'st the mourner's spirit,  
Accept my boundless thanks—thy pitying goodness  
Inspir'd my father's heart, and sent him hither  
To succour and sustain me. Oh, continue  
Thy strength'ning fervour, that I may not shrink  
From the great task I have begun, but rise  
An object worthy thy returning grace!

“*Ethel.* My gentle mistress, I partake your transport,

“Yet apprehension checks the rising joy.

“What agonies will pierce your Henry's heart—

“*Ros.* Peace, on thy life! seek not to wake again

“Those thoughts which I must hush within my breast;

“The lover is forgot; what Clifford's daughter

“Leaves unperform'd, Clifford himself will perfect.

“That tongue, whose wholesome counsels Henry wont,

“In early life, to listen and obey;

“That heart, which lov'd his virtues, will again

“Exert its power, and win him to applaud

“The minister of peace, who leads me hence

“To that asylum my offences claim.”

[*Exeunt.*

---

ACT V. SCENE I.

---

*The Bower. Table with Tapers, &c. Enter ROSAMOND and  
ETHELINDA.*

*Rosamond.*

Is it the vain suggestion of my fears,  
Or do unwonted sounds, and buzzing murmurs,  
Ride in each breeze?

*Ethel.* 'Tis fancy's coinage, all;  
Your mind, alarm'd lest any thwart event  
Should interrupt this night's important business,  
Creates false terrors.

*Ros.* Twice within this hour  
Hath it presented to my tortur'd sight  
My father in the agonies of death,  
Gasping and pale, and stretching forth his hands  
To me for aid and pity.

*Ethel.* When suspense  
And expectation hold dominion o'er  
The agitated bosom, these illusions  
Are busy to torment us.

*Ros.* Angels speed him  
In safety to me! and console my Henry,  
When he shall seek his Rosamond in vain  
Around this once-lov'd bower! When thou behold'st him,  
(O! can it be a crime to leave a sigh,  
One soft adieu for him, who was so dear?)  
Say, Ethelinda, that I left these walls  
Not with a harden'd, but a tutor'd mind,  
Not desp'rate, but resolv'd; arm'd with that due,  
That holy resolution, which becomes

My state and purpose ; and when busy memory  
Recalls the sad idea of our loves,  
(Too oft, alas ! I fear 't will press my mind)  
I'll pour my fervent prayers, that bliss and honour  
May crown the hero's days !

*Ethel.* I will do all  
My mistress bids ; but must I stay behind ?  
Must I renounce the sweet companionship,  
Her gentleness and soft humanity  
Have taught me to esteem my highest bliss ?

*Ros.* This once, obey—this night's great business done,  
I claim no duty more ; but when the storm  
Shall be o'er-blown, and all be calm again,  
If aught of good befall my after-hours,  
Thou, Ethelinda, shalt partake it with me.  
Go now, collect together those dear pledges,  
(The only treasure I shall carry hence,)  
My Henry's letters ; my o'er-harrass'd spirits  
Would sink beneath the task. [Exit Ethel.  
Ill-boding fears  
Possess me still ; such as I oft have heard  
Haunt the sick couch, death's sable harbingers.

*Enter the QUEEN, with a Bowl and Dagger.*

*Queen.* Ay, there the trait'ress sits. Who could surmise  
Guilt kept abode in such an angel-form ?  
Approach, thou beauteous fiend ! Well may'st thou start,  
'Tis Eleanor that calls ; she comes to wake thee  
From the vain dream, which thou hast long enjoy'd,  
To justice and atonement.

*Ros.* Shield me, powers,  
From that wrong'd form ! my fears are all explain'd !

*Queen.* No power can shield thee now—Thy prayers are fruitless;

Now cry in vain to him who hath undone thee,  
Who robb'd thee of thy innocence of heart,  
And taught thee to be rival to a queen.

*Ros.* Most injur'd Majesty, thus to the earth  
I bow myself before thee; I confess  
My heinous crimes; I sink beneath their weight:  
Yet, oh! take pity on a hapless creature  
Misd led by fatal love, immers'd in guilt,  
And blinded to the evils that ensued!

*Queen.* And plead'st thou that in thy defence, fond wretch,  
Which loudest cries against thee? Knew'st thou not  
Who Henry was, what were his noble ties?  
How did thy passion dare aspire so high?  
Thou should'st have sought within thine own degree  
Mates for thy wanton hours; then had'st thou not  
Debas'd a monarch in his people's eyes,  
Nor wak'd the vengeance of an injur'd queen.

*Ros.* Alas, thou look'st on me as on a wretch  
Familiar with pollution, reconcil'd  
To harden'd guilt, and all its shameless arts;  
I am not such. Night's holy lamps can witness  
What painful sighs my sad afflicted heart  
Have heav'd, what streaming tears my eyes have pour'd,  
To be releas'd from the pernicious snare  
Wherein I was involv'd!

*Queen.* Those sighs and tears,  
Had true contrition been their holy source,  
Should have inspir'd thy heart to break the snare,  
And set itself at freedom.

*Ros.* O! 't is true  
They should; but in my rebel breast they found



Too strong resistance; love hath been my fault,  
My bane, my ruin;——  
O let this very weakness plead my cause  
Within your royal breast; revolve, great queen,  
How you have lov'd, and let those tender feelings  
Win you to pity me!

*Queen.* [*Aside.*] What witchery  
Of language hangs upon this Circe's tongue?  
Why droops my resolution? rouse thee, Eleanor,  
Remember the great cause that brought thee hither,  
Nor let a harlot's sigh, or treach'rous tear,  
Subdue thy fortitude.

*Ros.* What shall I do  
To humble me yet lower in thy sight?  
What form of language shall my lips adopt  
To move thy mercy? I confess my crimes,  
Confess their heinousness, and sue for pardon:  
Can I do more; Even Heaven is won by tears,  
By contrite heart, and fervent supplication:  
Shalt thou be harder to appease—O hear!  
A woman's weakness claims a woman's pity.  
Exert that dignity of soul that rises  
Above resentment to a pleaded wrong,  
And teach me how to make atonement.

*Queen.* Hence!  
Encroaching weakness! coward heart, abjure it—  
Think on thy mighty wrongs—Arm thee to meet  
My words with noble firmness! Death alone  
Appeases Eleanor's insulted love.

*Ros.* Death, said'st thou?—Death! O yet—

*Queen.* Behold, deluder!  
I will not stain me in thy blood! this cup  
Contains thy doom.

[*Aside.*]

*Ros.* Oh! do not bid me die,  
Steep'd as I am in guilt; clos'd in a convent,  
Where Heaven's clear air and animating light  
Ne'er found an entrance; let me be condemn'd  
To all the hardships ever yet devis'd;  
Or banish me to roam far-distant realms,  
Unfriendly climates, and unsocial wastes,  
So thou afford me some remaining hours  
To reconcile my soul to that great summons,  
When Heaven shall deign to call.

*Queen.* Profane no more  
The name of Heaven with thy polluted breath,  
Thou who hast spurn'd its laws! Justice demands  
Thy forfeit life. Thou shalt no more mislead  
A monarch's noble mind; no more devise  
Insidious art, to work a queen's disgrace:  
Thou shalt not live to rob her of her rights,  
Her lord's affection, and imperial pride,  
That thou mayst seize the abdicated seat,  
And triumph in her fall.

*Ros.* By Heaven's pure grace,  
My mind ne'er harbour'd such an impious thought!

*Queen.* Heap not fresh crimes, thou hast enough already.

*Ros.* Have I no evidence on this side Heaven?  
And must I fall alone, unjustified?

Where is the holy Abbot? Where my Henry?

*Queen.* Thy Henry! thine!—That word hath fir'd anew  
My failing spirit. Drink!

*Ros.* Yet, yet, relent—

*Queen.* Drink! or this poignard searches every vein—

*Ros.* Is there no pity? None?—This awful silence—  
Hath answer'd me, and I intreat no more.  
Some greater power than thine demands my life;

Fate summons me; I hear, and I obey—

O, Heaven! if crimes like mine may hope forgiveness,  
Accept a contrite heart!

[*Drinks.*

*Queen.* O, beauteous witch!

Hadst thou been less alluring, or had I

Forgot to love, thou hadst not met this fate.

[*Aside.*

*Ros.* Thou art obey'd—Once more I bend before thee—

Nay, harden not thy heart to the last accents

Of a poor wretch, that hurries to her grave.

Look, look upon me; I behold thee not

With unforgiving and resentful eyes;

I deem thee but the destin'd instrument

Of righteous Heaven, to punish my misdeeds.

*Queen.* A flood of agony o'erwhelms my soul,

And all my pride and rage is wash'd away.

[*Aside.*

*Ros.* Now cast an eye of pity on my tears,

Now, in these awful, these tremendous moments,

Thou canst not doubt my truth. By my warm hopes

Of mercy at that throne where all must bow,

My only crime was love. No power on earth

Could have impell'd me to a further wrong

Against thy state or peace.

*Queen.* I must believe thee—

What then remains for me; O rise, and wreak

Thy vengeance on my now-relenting rage.

Behold these tears—My wrongs are all forgot—

Excess of passion, love that knew no bounds,

Drove me with execrable haste, to act—

What now I would resign all earthly bliss

To have undone again.

*King.* [*within.*] Seize all that haunt

These winding avenues—let none escape.

*Ros.* Ah me! that voice!

*Queen.* 'Tis Henry's; let him come,  
And take his share of mis'ry.

*Enter the KING, ETHELINDA, and Attendants, with Torches.*

*King.* Where, where is she?—  
O fell, vindictive fiend, what horrid act  
Hath thy dark rage been dealing?

*Queen.* Mad revenge!

*Ethel.* Lo! the dread means! all this my mind foretold,  
When the queen's train first met my startled eye.

*Ros.* Ev'n now my flitting spirit is on the wing;  
The deadly draught runs thro' my scorching blood,  
I feel it at my heart—O, Henry! Henry!—

*King.* Malicious rage, thou rid'st the lightning's flash  
To execute thy vengeance! Ethelinda,  
Thy zeal was cool, thy expedition slow,  
Compar'd to that fell tyrant's rapid heat.  
Lift up thine eyes—O! do not leave me yet—  
Why melts compassion in thy languid looks?  
The flames of fury should be kindled there,  
'Gainst him who left thee to invading Fate,  
Who saw not thy distress, heard not thy cries,  
When black revenge was pouring torments on thee!—  
O cruel woman, unrelenting fiend!—

*Ros.* Calm, calm thy mind; vent not thy fury there,  
Her wrongs cried loud, and her great heart is wrapt  
In sorrow for the deed.

*King.* What now avails it?  
Compunction should have sprang when she beheld  
The streaming tears course one another down  
Thy beauteous cheek, and read the speechless grief  
Of thy imploring eyes.—O! was it thus  
I thought to see my Rosamond again!—

Hath fury, like an eastern-blast, destroy'd  
The sweetest, loveliest flower that ever bloom'd?  
But I will die beside thee; never more  
Revisit cheerful day, nor dream of comfort,  
When thou art parted from me.

*Ros.* Cease, O! cease

These useless plainings; consecrate to peace  
The few remaining moments—nor let rage  
Impel thy soul to meditate revenge  
For a poor wretch, who justly thus atones  
Her numerous crimes. O, royal Eleanor!  
Hear these last accents—Howsoe'er I lov'd,  
However guilty I have seem'd to you,  
This very night I had resolv'd to leave  
These fatal walls, and, by my father's guidance,  
Devote my future days to penitence.

*King.* Doth not thy blood, like mine, halt in thy veins,  
And chill the seat of life?

*Ros.* Extend thy pity,

(I cannot wrong thee further) grant me now  
One moment to indulge the tender feelings  
Of hapless love, and breathe a fond adieu,  
Ere this poor harrass'd spirit quit my breast.

*King.* Why this compassion to the wretched cause  
Of all thy miseries! I am the source  
Of every pang, that feeds on thy lov'd heart—  
Of this thy fatal end.—Reproach, revile me—  
Do any thing but look thus kindly on me,  
And I will struggle with my mighty woes,  
Taught by thy great example.

“ *Ros* O, my Henry!

“ Let not the sad remembrance of my fate

“ Sit on thy heart, nor call my present state



" A misery ; I wish'd some sure retreat  
 " From grief and shame, and Heaven hath heard my prayer."

*Queen.* Unhappy victim of my blinded fury,  
 I almost envy thee thy present state ;  
 Thou soon wilt be at ease ; while I must live  
 To all the torments which a guilty mind  
 Inflicts upon itself.

*King.* Canst thou feel thus,  
 Yet couldst remain obdurate to her tears,  
 And deaf to her intreaties ?

*Queen.* A deed like this  
 Was foreign to my heart, had not the fraud  
 Been pour'd into my ears, that I was meant  
 To be divorc'd for ever from thine arms,  
 Be made an outcast from thy bed and throne,  
 That she might rise my substitute in all.

*King.* What black-soul'd dæmon could possess thy mind  
 With such a hellish falsehood ?

*Queen.* He—that fiend !

*CLIFFORD brought on in his disguise.*

*King.* Wretch, take thy death.

*Ros.* Forbear !

[ *Faints.*

*Cliff.* Strike, Henry, strike !

[ *Discovers himself.*

Why start'st thou back ? I shrink not from the blow ;  
 New woes assail me at that sinking object,  
 And all thy sword can do is mercy now.

*King.* Thou night, in tenfold darkness close me round,  
 From that much-injur'd form !

*Cliff.* My child, my child,

Oh ! wake, and let me once more hear thy voice.  
 Speak, speak, my Rosamond ; tell my sad heart  
 What further woe awaits it. Hath Affliction

Robb'd me of sense? or do I see the pangs  
Of ruthless death within thy struggling eye?

*Ros.* Thou dost, my father; let me bless thy goodness,  
Ere speech forsake me; thou art come to execute  
Thy pious promise—Fate prevents thy care,  
And I submit. My penitential tears,  
My hopes of heavenly mercy, and thy pardon,  
Alleviate death's sharp terrors.

*Cliff.* O! what hand  
Hath robb'd me of the latest ray of hope,  
That trembling glitter'd on my eve of life?

*Queen.* In me behold the murderer of thy peace!  
Vent thy reproaches, load me with thy curses,  
I bear them all; high as I am in rank,  
And proud in heart, I bend to make atonement,  
My rage unsex'd me; and the dire remembrance  
Will ever haunt my mind.

*King.* It will have vent.  
Lo, injur'd Clifford, Henry kneels before thee!  
Henry, who spurn'd the holy ties of friendship,  
The kindly brotherhood of human nature,  
And robb'd thee of thy child; yet let me mingle  
My penitential with thy pious tears  
O'er this lov'd form, for whom my heart weeps blood.

*Ros.* Peace, peace, a moment! let my parting spirit  
Glide gently hence; death hurries on apace.  
O! welcome! hide me in thy peaceful breast  
From the dread horrors that surround me here.—  
Confusion, shame, oppress my languid thoughts  
In this dread moment.—Ye, much-injur'd, pour  
Compassion on me now! Thou, royal Eleanor—  
Thou best of fathers—O forgive!—And thou,  
Beloved Henry!—Oh!—

[*Exit.*

*King.* Art thou then gone?——

And did thy dying looks and words speak pardon  
To thy destroyer? In that parting sigh  
The meekest, kindest spirit took its flight,  
That ever held abode in human breast.  
O, sorrowing Clifford! how shall I atone  
Thy bleeding injuries?

*Cliff.* It needs not, Henry;

My child lies dead before me—'Tis enough—  
One grave will hold us both—my failing heart  
Hath but few drops of life's warm stream remaining,  
Grief soon will drink them all—

*King.* What now can fate do more?

Rain, eyes, rain everlasting floods of tears  
O'er this sad monument of lawless love.

*Queen.* If thy torn heart can spare from its own anguish

"A moment's respite, hear! Thou knew'st me, Henry

"Was cruelty an inmate of this breast,

"When thou wert kind and constant? think what pang

"I must have felt, ere wrought to this black deed.

"Let that reflection win one pitying tear

"For all my suff'rings, and I ask no more.

*King.* It shall be so; and we will reign together

"In solemn, sad, uncomfortable woe."

*Queen.* Henry, farewell! the hand that's foul with murder,  
(Bear witness, Heaven!) shall ne'er be clos'd in thine.

To the sad cloister and repentant prayer

I give my future life. Hail, gloomy shades!

Ye best befit the execrable wretch,

Who, daring to assume the bolts of vengeance,

Dealt desolation with unbounded fury,

And shew'd the faults, she meant to punish, slight,

Compar'd to her, and her atrocious crimes.

[*Exit Queen.*]

*King.* In this great deed thou hast out-gone thy Henry,  
Peace to thy troubled soul! Ye hapless pair,  
Accept these tears, for ever will they flow,  
While memory recalls this dreadful scene.

*Here let the gay seducer turn his eyes,  
And see the dread effects of lawless love :  
Learn, 'tis no single crime—the mischief spreads  
To all the dearest ties of social life.  
Not only the deluded virgin's heart  
Falls the sad victim of his trait'rous art,  
But oft, a prey to one licentious deed,  
The friend, the lover, and the parent bleed.*

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## EPILOGUE.

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Written by G. COLMAN, Esq.

Spoken by Miss BARSANTI.

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*GREAT and fair ladies! Lords gallant and mighty!  
Behold a female—fresh from Otaheite.  
Stretch to the southern ocean your idea,  
And view, in me, the Princess Oberea.*

*Full three long hours I've sat, with smother'd rage,  
To hear the nonsense of your tragic stage,  
To see a queen majestically swagger,  
A bowl in this hand, and in this a dagger;  
To stab or poison (cruel inclination)  
A maid, who gave a husband consolation.*

*Ah, ladies! no such queen at Otaheite;  
Love there has roses—without thorns to fright ye;  
Frolic our days, and to compleat our joy,  
A Coterie's form'd—'t is call'd the Arreoy,  
Where love is free and general as the air,  
And ev'ry beau gallants with ev'ry fair;  
No ceremony binds, no rule controuls,  
But love, the only tyrant of our souls!*

*But pleasure's foreign to these northern climes,  
And love, I hear, unknown in these dull times:*



*Never was maiden in these days caught tripping,  
Never was wife on pleasure's ice found slipping:  
True to their lords, to gallantry ne'er prone,  
Divorces are so rare, the name's scarce known.*

*Yet in our southern air—at least, I'm told—  
Nor French nor Englishmen were quite so cold;  
And, if your poet of to-night say true,  
Love formerly warm'd British ladies too;  
And ladies of old times perhaps might plead,  
That modern ladies are the self-same breed.*

*There is a place, I'm told, call'd Doctor's Commons,  
Whence husbands issue to false wives dread summons:  
For each pretends, an all-sufficient elf,  
To keep a lady to his precious self.  
Yet man, proud man, from Oberon know,  
That female follies on your follies grow,  
And all your hopes of constancy are vain,  
If marriage binds not in a mutual chain.  
If in cold sheets ye leave poor Nell to sleep,  
And some fair Rose in Covent-Garden keep;  
Think of the ills that wake domestic strife,  
The heaviest care of all the cares of life—  
A tempting mistress, and an angry wife!*

*For you, ye fair, whom conscious virtue arms,  
And with her graces heightens beauty's charms,  
Hear a frail sister on your pity call,  
And save fair Rosamond a second Fall!*

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## NEW EPILOGUE,

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On the 15th Night of Performance,  
WRITTEN AND SPOKEN BY THE AUTHOR.

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---

*No more to painful doubts and fears a prey,  
Your kind indulgence chaces them away;  
Before your smiles each apprehension flies,  
And heart-felt gratitude the place supplies.*

*Blest be the land, and doubly blest the age,  
When no rude prejudice controuls the stage,  
But ev'n "the humblest in the muses' train"  
May find his efforts not employ'd in vain!*

*What fost'ring dew-drops to the teeming earth,  
That swell each slightest grain, and give it birth,  
What the sun's lib'ral and creative pow'r,  
That beams a beauty on the smallest flow'r,  
Such your indulgent smiles, which can diffuse  
A warmth and vigour to the feeblest muse,  
Supply each native weakness and defect,  
And prove, at once, the cause and the effect.*

*But let the bard, on whose deficient line  
Your nurt'ring candour may propitious shine,  
Still keep in grateful mind, whence springs the ray  
That gilds with grace his insufficient lay,*

*And of that grace how small a share he draws  
From his desert, how much from your applause;  
And should thenceforth the foster'd muse arise  
( Largely indulg'd for small abilities )  
To further efforts, by your favour fir'd,  
Check not the ardour, which yourselves inspir'd;  
But still extend your kind protecting aid,  
And patronize the bard, yourselves have made.*

---

7 JUL 52



PHÆDRA  
AND  
HIPPOLITUS.

A  
TRAGEDY.

BY MR. EDMUND SMITH.

ADAPTED FOR  
THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,  
AS PERFORMED AT  
THE THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOK,  
*By Permission of the Manager.*

---

The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation; and those  
printed in Italics are the Additions of the Theatre.

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LONDON:

*Printed for, and under the Direction of,*  
GEORGE CAWTHORN, British Library, STRAND.

M DCCXCVI.





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TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE.

CHARLES,  
LORD HALIFAX.

---

MY LORD,

*AS soon as it was made known that your lordship was not displeased with this Play, my friends began to value themselves upon the interest they had taken in its success; I was touched with a vanity I had not before been acquainted with, and began to dream of nothing less than the immortality of my work.*

*And I had sufficiently shewn this vanity in inscribing this Play to your Lordship, did I only consider you as one, to whom so many admirable pieces, to whom the praises of Italy, and the best Latin poem since the *Æneid*, that on the peace of Ryswick, are consecrated. But it had been intolerable presumption to have addressed it to you, my lord, who are the nicest judge of poetry, were you not also the greatest encourager of it; to you who excel all the present age as a poet, did you not surpass all the preceding ones as a patron.*

*For in the times when the Muses were most encouraged, the best writers were countenanced, but never advanced; they were admitted to the acquaintance of the greatest men, but that was all they were to expect. The bounty of the patron is no where to be read of but in the works of the poets, whereas your lordship's will fill those of the historians.*

*For what transactions can they write of which have not been managed by some who were recommended by your lordship? It is by your lordship's means, that the universities have been real nurseries for the state; that the courts abroad*

are charmed by the wit and learning, as well as the sagacity of our Ministers; that Germany, Switzerland, Muscovy, and even Turkey itself begins to relish the politeness of the English; that the poets at home adorn that court, which they formerly used only to deride; that abroad they travel, in a manner very unlike their predecessor Homer, and with an equipage he could not bestow, even on the heroes he designed to immortalize.

And this, my lord, shews your knowledge of men as well as writings, and your judgement no less than your generosity; you have distinguished between those, who by their inclinations or abilities were qualified for the pleasure only, and those that were fit for the service of your country; you made the one easy, and the other useful. You have left the one no occasion to wish for any preferment, and you have obliged the public by the promotion of the others.

And now, my lord, it may seem odd that I should dwell on the topick of your bounty only, when I might enlarge on so many others; when I ought to take notice of that illustrious family from which you are sprung, and yet of the great merit which was necessary to set you on a level with it, and to raise you to that house of peers, which was already filled with your relations; when I ought to consider the brightness of your wit in private conversation, and the solidity of your eloquence in public debates; when I ought to admire in you the politeness of a courtier, and the sincerity of a friend; the openness of behaviour which charms all who address themselves to you, and yet that hidden reserve which is necessary for those great affairs in which you are concerned.

To pass over all these great qualities, my lord, and insist only on your generosity, looks as if I solicited it for myself; but to that I quitted all manner of claim when I took notice

DEDICATION.

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*of your lordship's great judgement in the choice of those you advance; so that all at present my ambition aspires to is, that your Lordship would be pleased to pardon this presumption, and permit me to profess myself, with the most profound respect,*

*Your Lordship's most humble,*

*And most obedient Servant,*

*EDM. SMITH.*

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## PROLOGUE.

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BY MR. ADDISON.

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*LONG has a race of heroes fill'd the stage,  
That rant by note, and thro' the gamut rage ;  
Im songs and airs express their martial fire,  
Combat in trills, and in a feuge expire ;  
While, lull'd by sound, and undisturb'd by wit,  
Calm and serene you indolently sit ;  
And from the dull fatigue of thinking free,  
Hear the facetious fiddles repartee :  
Our homespun authors must forsake the field,  
And Shakspeare to the soft Scarletti yield.*

*To your new taste the poet of this day  
Was by a friend advis'd to form his play :  
Had Valentini, musically coy,  
Shunn'd Phædra's arms, and scorn'd the proffer'd joy,  
It had not mov'd your wonder to have seen  
An eunuch fly from an enamour'd queen :  
How would it please, should she in English speak,  
And could Hippolitus reply in Greek ?  
But he, a stranger to your modish way,  
By your old rules, must stand or fall to-day,  
And hopes you will your foreign taste command,  
To bear, for once, with what you understand.*

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Dramatis Personæ.

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COVENT-GARDEN.

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*Men.*

THESEUS, King of Crete,	- - -	Mr. Batty.
HIPPOLITUS, his Son, in love with Ismena,		Mr. Lewis.
LYCON, Minister of State,	- - -	Mr. Lee.
CRATANDER, Captain of the Guards,	-	Mr. Aickin.

*Women.*

PHÆDRA, Theseus's Queen, in love with Hippolitus,	- - - -	Mrs. Barry.
ISMENA, a captive Princess, in love with Hippolitus,	- - -	Mrs. Bulkley.

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*Guards, Attendants.*

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7 JU 52

Act II.

PHEDRA & HIPPOLYTUS.



W. H. del.

Long sc.

MR. HOLMAN as HIPPOLYTUS.

His idle horn on fragrant myrtles hung,  
His arrows scatter'd, and his bow unstrung.

London, Printed by J. Cawthorn, British Library, Strand Aug<sup>o</sup> 20 1798.



London Printed for G. Dawkins, Smith Library Street Aug 8. 1798.

7 JUL 52





## PHÆDRA AND HIPPOLITUS.

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### ACT I. SCENE I.

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CRATANDER and LYCON enter.

*Lycon.*

'Tis strange, Cratander, that the royal Phædra  
Should still continue resolute in grief,  
And obstinately wretched :  
That one so gay, so beautiful and young,  
Of godlike virtue and imperial power,  
Should fly inviting joys, and court destruction.

*Crat.* Is there not cause, when lately join'd in marriage,  
To have the king her husband call'd to war ?  
Then for three tedious moons to mourn his absence,  
Nor know his fate ?

*Lyc.* The king may cause her sorrow,  
But not by absence : oft I've seen him hang  
With greedy eyes and languish o'er her beauties ;  
She from his wide, deceiv'd, desiring arms  
Flew tasteless, loathing ; whilst dejected Theseus,  
With mournful loving eyes pursu'd her flight,  
And dropt a silent tear.

*Crat.* Ha ! this is hatred,  
This is aversion, horror, detestation :  
Why did the queen, who might have cull'd mankind,

Why did she give her person and her throne  
To one she loath'd?

*Lyc.* Perhaps she thought it just  
That he should wear the crown his valour sav'd.

*Crat.* Could she not glut his hopes with wealth and honour,

Reward his valour, yet reject his love?  
Why, when a happy mother, queen and widow,  
Why did she wed old Theseus? while his son,  
The brave Hippolitus, with equal youth  
And equal beauty might have fill'd her arms.

*Lyc.* Hippolitus (in distant Scythia born,  
The warlike Amazon, Camilla's son)  
'Till our queen's marriage, was unknown to Crete:  
And sure the queen could wish him still unknown:  
She loaths, detests him, flies his hated presence,  
And shrinks and trembles at his very name.

*Crat.* Well may she hate the prince she needs must fear;  
He may dispute the crown with Phædra's son.  
He's brave, he's fiery, youthful, and belov'd;  
His courage charms the men, his form the women;  
His very sports are war.

*Lyc.* Oh! he's all hero; scorns th' inglorious ease  
Of lazy Crete; delights to shine in arms,  
To wield the sword, and launch the pointed spear;  
To tame the gen'rous horse, that nobly wild  
Neighs on the hills, and dares the angry lion;  
"To join the struggling coursers to his chariot,  
"To make their stubborn necks the rein obey,  
"To turn, or stop, or stretch along the plain."  
Now the queen's sick, there's danger in his courage.—  
'He must be watch'd.'

Be ready with your guards.—I fear Hippolitus. [*Exit Crat.*  
Fear him! for what? poor silly virtuous wretch!

Affecting glory, and contemning power :  
 Warm without pride, without ambition brave ;  
 A senseless hero ; fit to be a tool  
 To those whose godlike souls are turn'd for empire.  
 An open honest fool, that loves and hates,  
 And yet more fool to own it. He hates flatterers,  
 He hates me too ; weak boy, to make a foe  
 Where he might have a slave. I hate him too ;  
 But cringe, and flatter, fawn, adore, yet hate him.  
 Let the queen live or die, the prince must fall.

*ISMENA enters.*

What, still attending on the queen, Ismena ?  
 O charming virgin ! O exalted virtue !  
 Can still your goodness conquer all your wrongs ?  
 Are you not robb'd of your Athenian crown ?  
 Was not your royal father Pallas slain ?  
 And all his wretched race, by conqu'ring Theseus ?  
 And do you still watch o'er his consort Phædra ?  
 And still repay such cruelty with love ?

*Ism.* Let them be cruel that delight in mischief :  
 I'm of a softer mould ; poor Phædra's sorrows  
 Pierce through my yielding heart, and wound my soul.

*Lyc.* Now thrice the rising sun has chear'd the world,  
 Since she renew'd her strength with due refreshment ;  
 Thrice has the night brought ease to man, to beast,  
 Since wretched Phædra clos'd her streaming eyes :  
 " She flies all rest, all necessary food,  
 " Resolv'd to die, nor capable to live."

*Ism.* But now her grief has wrought her into phrenzy ;  
 The images her troubled fancy forms  
 Are incoherent, wild ; her words disjointed :  
 Sometimes she raves for musick, light, and air.

Nor air, nor light, nor musick, calm her pains ;  
Then with extatic strength she springs aloft,  
And moves and bounds with vigour not her own.

*Lyc.* Then life is on the wing ; then most she sinks  
When most she seems reviv'd. Like boiling water,  
That foams and hisses o'er the crackling wood,  
And bubbles to the brim ; ev'n then most wasting,  
When most it swells.

*Ism.* My lord, now try your art ;  
Her wild disorder may disclose the secret  
Her cooler sense conceal'd ; " the Pythian goddess  
" Is dumb and sullen, 'till with fury fill'd  
" She spreads, she rises, growing to the sight,  
" She stares, she foams, she raves ; the awful secrets  
" Burst from her trembling lips, and ease the tortur'd maid."  
But Phædra comes, ye gods, how pale, how weak !

PHÆDRA and Attendants enter.

*Phæd.* Stay, virgins, stay ; I'll rest my weary steps :  
My strength forsakes me, and my dazzled eyes  
Ake with the flashing light ; my loosen'd knees  
Sink under their dull weight. Support me, Lycon.  
Alas ! I faint.

*Lyc.* Afford her ease, kind Heav'n !

*Phæd.* Why blaze these jewels round my wretched head ?  
" Why all this labour'd elegance of dress ?  
" Why flow these wanton curls in artful rings ?"  
Take, snatch 'em hence. Alas ! you all conspire  
To heap new sorrows on my tortur'd soul :  
All, all conspire to make your queen unhappy.

*Lady.* This you requir'd, and to the pleasing task  
Call'd your officious maids, and urg'd their art ;  
You bid 'em lead you from yon hideous darkness

To the glad chearing day, yet now avoid it,  
And hate the light you sought.

*Phæd.* O my Lycon!

Oh! how I long to lay my weary head  
On tender flow'ry beds and springing grass,  
To stretch my limbs beneath the spreading shades  
Of venerable oaks, to slake my thirst  
With the cool nectar of refreshing springs.

*Lyc.* I'll sooth her phrenzy. Come, Phædra, let's away;  
Let's to the woods and lawns, and limpid streams.

*Phæd.* Come, let's away; and thou, most bright Diana,  
Goddess of woods, immortal, chaste Diana,  
"Goddess presiding o'er the rapid race,"  
Place me, O place me in the dusty ring,  
Where youthful charioteers contend for glory;  
See how they mount and shake the flowing reins,  
See from the goal the fiery coursers bound,  
Now they strain panting up the steepy hill,  
Now sweep along its top, now neigh along the vale;  
How the car rattles, how its kindling wheels  
Smoak in the whirl! the circling sand ascends,  
And in the noble dust the chariot's lost.

*Lyc.* What, madam!

*Phæd.* Ah, my Lycon! ah, what said I?  
Where was I hurry'd by my roving fancy?  
My languid eyes are wet with sudden tears,  
And on my cheeks unbidden blushes glow.

*Lyc.* Then blush, but blush for your destructive silence,  
That tears your soul, and weighs you down to death.  
Oh! should you die (ye pow'rs forbid her death)  
Who then would shield from wrongs your helpless orphan?  
He then might wander, Phædra's son might wander,  
A naked suppliant through the world for aid;



"Then he may cry, invoke his mother's name :  
"He may be doom'd to chains, to shame, to death,"  
While proud Hippolitus "shall mount his throne."

*Phæd.* O Heav'ns !

*Lyc.* Ha ! Phædra, are you touch'd at this ?

*Phæd.* Unhappy wretch ! what name was that you spoke ?

*Lyc.* And does his name provoke your just resentments ?  
Then let it raise your fear, as well as wrath :  
Think how you wrong'd him, to his father wrong'd him ;  
Think how you drove him hence a wand'ring exile  
To distant climes ; then think what certain vengeance  
His rage may wreak on your unhappy orphan.  
For his sake then renew your drooping spirits ;  
Feed with new oil the wasting lamp of life,  
That winks and trembles, now, just now expiring :  
Make haste, preserve your life.

*Phæd.* Alas ! too long,  
Too long have I preserv'd that guilty life.

*Lyc.* Guilty ! what guilt ? has blood, has horrid murder  
Imbru'd your hands ?

*Phæd.* Alas ! my hands are guiltless ;  
But oh ! my heart's defil'd.  
I've said too much ; forbear the rest, my Lycon,  
And let me die to save the black confession.

*Lyc.* Die then, but not alone ; old faithful Lycon  
Shall be a victim to your cruel silence.  
Will you not tell ? O lovely wretched queen !  
"By all the cares of your first infant years ;"  
By all the love, and faith, and zeal I've shew'd you,  
Tell me your griefs, unfold your hidden sorrows,  
And teach your Lycon how to bring you comfort.

"*Phæd.* What shall I say, malicious cruel pow'rs ?  
"O where shall I begin ? O cruel Venus !

"How fatal Love has been to all our race!

*Lyc.* Forget it, madam; let it die in silence."

*Phæd.* O Ariadne! O unhappy sister!

*Lyc.* Cease to record your sister's grief and shame.

*Phæd.* And since the cruel god of love requires it,  
I fall the last, and most undone of all.

*Lyc.* Do you then love?

*Phæd.* Alas! I groan beneath  
The pain, the guilt, the shame of impious love.

*Lyc.* Forbid it, Heav'n!

*Phæd.* Do not upbraid me, Lycon:  
I love.—Alas! I shudder at the name;  
My blood runs backward, and my fault'ring tongue  
Sticks at the sound—I love.—O righteous Heav'n!  
Why was I born with such a sense of virtue,  
So great abhorrence of the smallest crime,  
And yet a slave to such impetuous guilt?  
Rain on me, gods, your plagues, your sharpest tortures,  
Afflict my soul with any thing but guilt,  
And yet that guilt is mine.—I'll think no more;  
I'll to the woods among the happier brutes.  
Come, let's away; hark, the shrill horn resounds,  
The jolly huntsmens cries rend the wide heav'ns.  
Come, o'er the hills pursue the bounding stag;  
Come, chase the lion and the foamy boar;  
Come, rouse up all the monsters of the wood,  
For there, ev'n there, Hippolitus will guard me.

*Lyc.* Hippolitus!

*Phæd.* Who's he that names Hippolitus?  
Ah! I'm betray'd, and all my guilt discover'd.  
"Oh! give me poison, swords, I'll not live, nor bear it;  
"I'll stop my breath.  
"Ism. I'm lost, but what's that loss?

" Hippolitus is lost, or lost to me :

" Yet should her charms prevail upon his soul,

" Should he be false, I would not wish him ill ;

" With my last parting breath I'd bless my lord :

" Then in some lonely desert place expire,

" Whence my unhappy death shall never reach him,

" Lest it should wound his peace, or damp his joys." [*Aside.*

*Lyc.* Think still the secret in your royal breast ;

For by the awful majesty of Jove,

By the All-seeing Sun, by righteous Minos,

By all your kindred gods we swear, O Phædra,

Safe as our lives we'll keep the fatal secret.

" *Ism. &c.* We swear, all swear to keep it ever secret."

*Phæd.* Keep it! from whom? why, it's already known;

The tale, the whisper of the babbling vulgar :

Oh! can you keep it from yourselves, unknow it?

Or do you think I'm so far gone in guilt,

That I can see, can bear the looks, the eyes

Of one who knows my black detested crimes,

Of one who knows that Phædra loves her son?

*Lyc.* Unhappy queen! august, unhappy race!

Oh! why did Theseus touch this fatal shore?

Why did he save us from Nicander's arms,

To bring worse ruin on us by his love?

*Phæd.* His love indeed; for that unhappy hour

In which the priests join'd Theseus' hand to mine,

Shew'd the young Scythian to my dazzled eyes.

Gods! how I shook! what boiling heat inflam'd

My panting breast! how from the touch of Theseus

My slack hand dropt, and all the idle pomp,

Priests, altars, victims, swam before my sight!

The god of Love, ev'n the whole god, possess me.

*Lyc.* At once, at first possess you!

*Pbæd.* Yes, at first.

That fatal ev'ning we pursu'd the chace,  
 When from behind the wood, with rustling sound,  
 A monstrous boar rush'd forth: "his baleful eyes  
 "Shot glaring fire, and his stiff-pointed bristles  
 "Rose high upon his back:" at me he made,  
 Whetting his tusks, and churning hideous foam;  
 Then, then Hippolitus flew in to aid me:  
 Collecting all himself, and rising to the blow,  
 He launch'd the whistling spear; the well-aim'd jav'lin  
 Pierc'd his tough hide, and quiver'd in his heart;  
 The monster fell, "and gnashing with huge tusks,  
 "Plow'd up the crimson earth." But then Hippolitus?  
 Gods! how he mov'd and look'd when he approach'd me!  
 "When hot and panting from the savage conquest,  
 "Dreadful as Mars, and as his Venus lovely,  
 "His crimson cheeks with purple beauties glow'd,  
 "His lovely sparkling eyes shot martial fires."  
 O godlike form! O ecstasy and transport!  
 My breath grew short, my beating heart sprung upward,  
 And leap'd and bounded in my heaving bosom.  
 Alas! I'm pleas'd; the horrid story charms me.—  
 No more—That night with fear and love I sicken'd.  
 Oft I receiv'd his fatal charming visits;  
 Then would he talk with such an heav'nly grace,  
 Look with such dear compassion on my pains,  
 That I could wish to be so sick for ever.  
 My ears, my greedy eyes, my thirsty soul,  
 Drank gorging in the dear delicious poison,  
 'Till I was lost, quite lost in impious love.  
 "And shall I drag an execrable life?  
 "And shall I hoard up guilt, and treasure vengeance?  
 "Lyc. No; labour, strive, subdue that guilt, and live.

*Phæd.* Did I not labour, strive, All-seeing Pow'rs!  
" Did I not weep and pray, implore your aid?  
" Burn clouds of incense on your loaded altars?  
" Oh! I call'd heaven and earth to my assistance,  
" All the ambitious thirst of fame and empire,  
" And all the honest pride of conscious virtue:  
" I struggled, rav'd; the new-born passion reign'd  
" Almighty in its birth."

*Lyc.* Did you e'er try  
To gain his love?

*Phæd.* Avert such crimes, ye pow'rs!  
" No; to avoid his love I sought his hatred:  
" I wrong'd him, shunn'd him, banish'd him from Crete;  
" I sent him, drove him from my longing sight:  
" In vain I drove him, for his tyrant form  
" Reign'd in my heart, and dwelt before my eyes.  
" If to the gods I pray'd, the very vows  
" I made to heav'n were by my erring tongue  
" Spoke to Hippolitus. If I try'd to sleep,  
" Straight to my drowsy eyes my restless fancy  
" Brought back his fatal form, and curst my slumber.

*Lyc.* First let me try to melt him into love."

*Phæd.* No; did his hapless passion equal mine,  
I would refuse the bliss I most desir'd,  
Consult my fame, and sacrifice my life.  
Yes, I would die, Heaven knows, this very moment,  
Rather than wrong my lord, my husband Theseus.

*Lyc.* Perhaps that lord, that husband is no more;  
He went from Crete in haste, his army thin,  
To meet the numerous troops of fierce Molossians;  
Yet though he lives, while ebbing life decays,  
Think on your son.

*Phæd.* Alas! that shocks me.



O let me see my young one, let me snatch  
A hasty farewell, a last dying kiss.  
Yet stay; his sight will melt my just resolves:  
But oh! I beg with my last sallying breath—  
Cherish my babe.

*A Messenger enters.*

*Mess.* Madam, I grieve to tell you  
What you must know: your royal husband's dead.

*Phæd.* Dead! O ye pow'rs!

*Lyc.* O fortunate event!

Then earth-born Lycon may ascend the throne,  
Leave to his happy son the crown of Jove,  
And be ador'd like him. *Be husb'd, my joys.* [*Aside.*

"Mourn, mourn, ye Cretans;  
"Since he is dead, whose valour sav'd your isle,  
"Whose prudent care with flowing plenty crown'd  
"His peaceful subjects; as your tow'ring Ida,  
"With spreading oaks, and with descending streams,  
"Shades and enriches all the plains below."  
Say how he dy'd.

*Mess.* He dy'd as Theseus ought;  
In battle dy'd: Philotas, now a prisoner,  
That rushing on fought next his royal person,  
That saw his thund'ring arm beat squadrons down,  
Saw the great rival of Alcides fall.  
These eyes beheld his well-known steed, beheld  
A proud barbarian glitt'ring in his arms,  
Encumber'd with the spoil. [*Exit.*

*Phæd.* Is he then dead?

Is my much-injur'd lord, my Theseus, dead?  
And don't I shed one tear upon his urn?  
What! not a sigh, a groan, a soft complaint?

Ah! these are tributes due from pious brides,  
From a chaste matron, and a virtuous wife:  
But savage Love, the tyrant of my heart,  
Claims all my sorrows, and usurps my grief.

*Lyc.* Dismiss that grief, and give a loose to joy:  
He's dead, the bar of all your bliss is dead;  
Live then, my Queen, forget the wrinkled Theseus,  
And take the youthful hero to your arms.

*Phæd.* I dare not now admit of such a thought,  
"And bless'd be heav'n that steel'd my stubborn heart;  
"That made me shun the bridal bed of Theseus,  
"And give him empire, but refuse him love.

*Lyc.* Then may his happier son be blest with both;  
"Then rouse your soul, and muster all your charms,  
"Sooth his ambitious mind with thirst of empire,  
"And all his tender thoughts with soft allurements."

*Phæd.* But should the youth refuse my proffer'd love!  
O should he throw me from his loathing arms!  
I fear the trial; for I know Hippolitus  
Fierce in the right, and obstinately good:  
"When round beset, his virtue like a flood,  
"Breaks with resistless force th' opposing dams,  
"And bears the mounds along; they're hurry'd on,  
"And swell the torrent they were rais'd to stop."  
I dare not yet resolve; I'll try to live,  
And to the awful gods I'll leave the rest.

*Lyc.* Madam, your signet, that your slave may order  
What's most expedient for your royal service.

*Phæd.* Take it, and with it take the fate of Phædra.  
And thou, O Venus! aid a suppliant queen,  
That owns thy triumphs, and adores thy power:  
"O spare thy captives, and subdue thy foes.  
"On this cold Scythian let thy pow'r be known,  
"And in a lover's cause assert thy own:

" Then Crete, as Paphos, shall adore thy shrine;  
 " This nurse of Jove with grateful fires shall shine,  
 " And with thy father's flames shall worship thine."

[Exit Phæd. &c.

Lycon *solus*.

*Lyc.* If she proposes love, why then as surely  
 His haughty soul refuses it with scorn.—  
 Say I confine him!—If she dies he's safe;  
 And if she lives, I'll work her raging mind.  
 A woman scorn'd, with ease I'll work to vengeance:  
 With humble, wise, obsequious fawning arts,  
 I'll rule the whirl and transport of her soul;  
 That when her reason hates, her rage may act.

*When barks glide slowly through the lazy main,  
 The baffled pilots turn the belms in vain;  
 When driven by winds they cut the foamy way,  
 The rudders govern, and the ships obey.*

[Exit.

ACT II. SCENE I.

PHÆDRA, LYCON, and Messenger, *enter*.

*Messenger.*

MADAM, the Prince Hippolitus attends.

*Phæd.* Admit him. Where, where, Phædra's now thy  
 soul!

What—shall I speak? And shall my guilty tongue  
 Let this insulting victor know his pow'r?  
 Or shall I still confine within my breast  
 My restless passions and devouring flames?  
 But see he comes, the lovely tyrant comes.—  
 He rushes on me like a blaze of light;  
 I cannot bear the transport of his presence,  
 But sink, oppress'd with woe.

[Swoons.

HIPPOLITUS *enters.*

*Hip.* Immortal gods!

What have I done to raise such strange abhorrence?  
What have I done to shake her shrinking nature  
With my approach, and kill her with my sight?

*Lyc.* Alas! another grief devours her soul,  
And only your assistance can relieve her.

*Hip.* Ha! make it known, that I may fly and aid her.

*Lyc.* But promise first, my lord, to keep it secret.

*Hip.* Promise! I swear, on this good sword I swear,  
This sword, which first gain'd youthful Theseus honour!  
Which oft has punish'd perjury and falshood;  
By thund'ring Jove, by Grecian Hercules,  
"By the majestic form of godlike heroes,  
"That shine around, and consecrate the steel;"  
No racks, no shame, shall ever force it from me.

*Phæd.* Hippolitus.

*Hip.* Yes, 'tis that wretch who begs you to dismiss  
That hated object from your eyes for ever.  
Begs leave to march against the foes of Theseus,  
And to revenge or share his father's fate.

*Phæd.* O Hippolitus!

I own I've wrong'd you, most unjustly wrong'd you;  
Drove you from court, from Crete, and from your father:  
The court, all Crete, deplor'd their suffering hero,  
And I (the sad occasion) most of all.  
Yet could you know relenting Phædra's soul!  
Oh, could you think with what reluctant grief  
I wrong'd the hero whom I wish'd to cherish!  
Oh! you'd confess me wretched, not unkind,  
And own those ills did most deserve your pity,  
Which most procur'd your hate.

*Hip.* My hate to Phædra!

Ha! could I hate the royal spouse of Theseus,  
My queen, my mother?

*Phæd.* Why your queen and mother?

More humble ties would suit my lost condition.

Alas! the iron hand of death is on me,

And I have only time to implore your pardon.

Ah! would my lord forget injurious Phædra,

And with compassion view her helpless orphan!

Would he receive him to his dear protection,

Defend his youth from all encroaching foes!

*Hip.* Oh, I'll defend him! with my life defend him!

Heav'n, dart your judgment on this faithless head,

If I don't pay him all a slave's obedience,

And all a father's love.

*Phæd.* A father's love!

Oh, doubtful sounds! oh, vain deceitful hopes!

My grief's much eas'd by this transcending goodness,

And Theseus' death sits lighter on my soul.

Death! he's not dead: he lives, he breathes, he speaks;

He lives in you, he's present to my eyes;

I see him, speak to him.—My heart! I rave,

And all my folly's known.

*Hip.* Oh, glorious folly!

See, Theseus, see, how much your Phædra lov'd you.

*Phæd.* Love him, indeed! dote, languish, die for him.

Forsake my food, my sleep, all joys for Theseus;

“(But not that hoary, venerable Theseus)”

But Theseus, as he was when mantling blood

Glow'd in his lovely cheeks; “when his bright eyes

“Sparkled with youthful fires;” when ev'ry grace

Shone in the father, which now crowns the son;

When Theseus was Hippolitus.



*Hip.* Ha ! amazement strikes me :  
Where will this end ?

*Lyc.* Is't difficult to guess ?  
Does not her flying paleness, " that but now  
" Sat cold and languid in her fading cheek,  
" (Where now succeeds a momentary lustre)  
" Does not her beating heart," her trembling limbs,  
Her wishing looks, her speech, her present silence,  
All, all proclaim imperial Phædra loves you ?

*Hip.* What do I hear ? what, does no lightning flash,  
No thunder bellow, when such monstrous crimes  
Are own'd, avow'd, confest ? All-seeing Sun !  
Hide, hide in shameful night thy beamy head,  
And cease to view the horrors of thy race.  
Alas, I share th' amazing guilt ; these eyes,  
That first inspir'd the black incestuous flame,  
These ears, that heard the tale of impious love,  
Are all accurs'd, and all deserve your thunder.

*Phæd.* Alas, my lord ! believe me not so vile.  
No ; " by thy goddess, by the chaste Diana,  
" None but my first, my much-lov'd lord Arsamnes,  
" Was e'er receiv'd in these unhappy arms."  
No ; for the love of thee, of those dear charms,  
Which now I see are doom'd to be my ruin,  
I still deny'd my lord, my husband Theseus,  
The chaste, the modest joys of spotless marriage ;  
That drove him hence to war, to stormy seas,  
To rocks and waves, less cruel than his Phædra.

*Hip.* If that drove Theseus hence, then that kill'd Theseus,  
And cruel Phædra kill'd her husband Theseus.

*Phæd.* Forbear, rash youth, nor dare to rouse my vengeance ;

Provoke me not ; nor tempt my swelling rage  
With black reproaches, scorn, and provocation,  
To do a deed my reason would abhor.

Long has the secret struggled in my breast,  
Long has it rack'd and rent my tortur'd bosom ;  
But now 'tis out. Shame, rage, confusion tear  
And drive me on to act unheard-of crimes ;  
To murder thee, myself, and all that know it.  
As when convulsions cleave the lab'ring earth,  
Before the dismal yawn appears, the ground  
'Trembles and heaves, the nodding houses crash ;  
He's safe, who from the dreadful warning flies,  
But he that sees its opening bosom, dies.

[Exit.

Hip. Then let me take the warning and retire ;  
I'd rather trust the rough Ionian waves,  
Than woman's fiercer rage.

“ [Ismena shews herself, listening.] ”

Lyc. Alas, my lord !

You must not leave the queen to her despair.

Hip. Must not ! from thee ? from that vile upstart Lycon !

Lyc. Yes ; from that Lycon who derives his greatness  
From Phædra's race, and now would guard her life.  
Then, sir, forbear ; view here this royal signet,  
And in her faithful slave obey the queen.

CRATANDER and Guards enter.

Guards, watch the prince, but at that awful distance,  
With that respect, it may not seem confinement,  
But only meant for honour.

Hip. So, confinement is  
The honour Crete bestows on Theseus' son ;  
Am I confin'd ? and is't so soon forgot,  
When fierce Procrustes' arms o'er-ran your kingdom ?

When your streets echo'd with the cries of orphans,  
 Your shrieking maids clung round the hallow'd shrines,  
 When all your palaces and lofty towers  
 Smoak'd on the earth, when the red sky around  
 Glow'd with your city's flames, (a dreadful lustre) ;  
 Then, then my father flew to your assistance ;  
 Then Theseus sav'd your lives, estates, and honours.  
 And do you thus reward the hero's toil ?  
 And do you now confine the hero's son ?

*Lyc.* Take not an easy short confinement ill,  
 Which your own safety and the queen's requires.  
 Nor harbour fear of one that joys to serve you.

*Hip.* Oh, I disdain thee, traitor, but not fear thee ;  
 Nor will I hear of services from Lycon.  
 Thy very looks are lies : eternal falshood  
 Smiles in thy looks, and flatters in thy eyes ;  
 Ev'n in thy humble face I read my ruin,  
 In ev'ry cringing bow and fawning smile.  
 Why else d'ye whisper out your dark suspicions ?  
 Why with malignant eulogies encrease  
 The people's fears, and praise me to my ruin ?  
 Why through the troubled streets of frighted Gnosus,  
 Do bucklers, helms, and polish'd armour blaze ?  
 Why sounds the dreadful din of instant war,  
 Whilst still the foe's unknown ?

*Lyc.* Then quit thy arts ;  
 Put off the statesman, and resume the judge. [ *Aside.*  
 Thou, Proteus, shift thy various forms no more,  
 But boldly own the god.—That foe's too near.

[ *To Hippolitus.*

The queen's disease, and your aspiring mind,  
 Disturb all Crete, and give a loose to war.

*Hip.* Gods ! dares he speak thus to a monarch's son,

And must this earth-born slave command in Crete ?  
Was it for this my godlike father fought ?  
Did Theseus bleed for Lycon ? O ye Cretans,  
See there your king, the successor of Minos,  
And heir of Joye.

*Lyc.* You may as well provoke  
That Jove you worship, as this slave you scorn.  
Go seize Almæon, Nicias, and all  
The black abettors of this impious treason.

[*Exit a Soldier.*]

Now o'er thy head th' avenging thunder rolls ;  
For know, on me depends thy instant doom.  
Then learn, proud prince, to bend thy haughty soul ;  
And, if thou think'st of life, obey the queen.

*Hip.* Then, free from fear or guilt, I'll wait my doom.  
Whate'er's my fault, no stain shall blot my glory.  
I'll guard my honour, you dispose my life.

*Lyc.* Be it so, Cratander follow me.

[*Exeunt Lyc. and Crat.*]

*Hip.* Since he dares brave my rage, the danger's near.  
The timorous hounds that hunt the generous lion  
Bay afar off, and tremble in pursuit ;  
But when he struggles in th' entangling toils,  
Insult the dying prey.

*ISMENA and Lady enter.*

" 'Tis kindly done, Ismena,  
" With all your charms to visit my distress ;  
" Soften my chains, and make confinement easy."  
O, Ismena, is it then giv'n me to behold thy beauties !  
" Those blushing sweets, those lovely loving eyes !"  
To press, to strain thee to my beating heart,  
And grow thus to my love ! What's liberty to this ?

What's fame or greatness? take 'em, take 'em, Phædra,  
"Freedom and fame," and in the dear confinement  
Enclose me thus for ever.

*Ism.* O Hippolitus!

Oh, I could ever dwell in this confinement!  
Nor wish for aught while I behold my lord:  
But yet that wish, that only wish is vain,  
When my hard fate thus forces me to beg you'd  
Drive from your godlike soul a wretched maid:  
Take to your arms (assist me, Heav'n! to speak it)  
Take to your arms imperial Phædra,  
And think of me no more.

*Hip.* Not think of thee?

What! part, for ever part? unkind Ismena!  
Oh! can you think that death is half so dreadful,  
As it would be to live, and live without thee?  
Say, should I quit thee, should I turn to Phædra,  
Say, couldst thou bear it? could thy tender soul  
Endure the torment of despairing love,  
And see me settled in a rival's arms?

*Ism.* Think not of me: Perhaps my equal mind  
May learn to bear the fate the gods allot me.  
Yet would you hear me: "could your lov'd Ismena,  
"With all her charms, o'er-rule your sullen honour,"  
You yet might live, nor leave the poor Ismena.

*Hip.* Speak: if I can, I am ready to obey.

*Ism.* Give the queen hopes.

*Hip.* No more—my soul disdains it.

No; should I try, my haughty soul would swell,  
Sharpen each word, and threaten in my eyes.  
Oh, should I stoop to cringe, to lie, forswear?  
Deserve the ruin which I strive to shun?

*Ism.* Oh, I can't bear this cold contempt of death!



This rigid virtue that prefers your glory  
To liberty or life. O cruel man!

"By these sad sighs, by these poor streaming eyes,

"By that dear love that makes us now unhappy,

"By the near danger of that precious life,

"Heav'n knows I value much above my own.

"What! not yet mov'd?" are you resolv'd on death?

Then, ere 'tis night, I swear by all the pow'rs,

This steel shall end my fears and life together.

*Hip.* You sha'n't be trusted with a life so precious.

"No; to the court I'll publish your design:

"Ev'n bloody Lycon will prevent your fate;

"Lycon shall wrench the dagger from your bosom,

"And raving Phædra will preserve Ismena.

*Is.* Phædra! come on, I'll lead you on to Phædra:

"I'll tell her all the secrets of our love;

"Give to her rage her close destructive rival:

"Her rival sure will fall; her love may save you.

"Come, see me labour in the pangs of death,

"My agonizing limbs, my dying eyes,

"Dying, yet fix'd in death on my Hippolitus."

*Hip.* "What's your design?" ye pow'rs! what means  
my love?

*Is.* She means to lead you in the road of fate;

She means to die with one she can't preserve.

Yet when you see me pale upon the earth,

This once-lov'd form grown horrible in death,

Sure your relenting soul would wish you'd sav'd me.

*Hip.* Oh! I'll do all, do any thing to save you;

Give up my fame, and all my darling honour:

"I'll run, I'll fly; what you'll command I'll say."

*I yield, Ismena. What would you have me do?*

*Is.* Say what occasion, chance, or Heav'n inspires;

Say that you love her, that you lov'd her long ;  
 Say that you'll wed her, say that you'll comply ;  
 Say, to preserve your life, say any thing.

Bless him, ye pow'rs ! and if it be a crime, [Exit Hip.  
 Oh ! if the pious fraud offend your justice,  
 Aim all your vengeance on Ismena's head ;  
 Punish Ismena, but forgive Hippolitus.

“ He's gone, and now my brave resolves are stagger'd,

“ Now I repent, like some despairing wretch

“ That boldly plunges in the frightful deep,

“ That pants and struggles with the whirling waves,

“ And catches ev'ry slender reed to save him.

*Lady.* But should he do what your commands enjoin'd him,  
 Say, should he wed her ?

*Ism.* Should he wed the queen ?

Oh ! I'd remember that 'twas my request,  
 And die well pleas'd I made the hero happy.

*Lady.* Die ! does Ismena then resolve to die ?

*Ism.* Can I then live ? can I, who lov'd so well,  
 To part with all my bliss to save my lover ?  
 Oh ! can I drag a wretched life without him,  
 And see another revel in his arms ?  
 Oh, 'tis in death alone I can have comfort !

LYCON enters.

*Lyc.* What a reverse is this ! perfidious boy,  
 Is this thy truth ? Is this thy boasted honour ?  
 Then all are rogues alike : I never thought  
 But one man honest, and that one deceives me.  
 Ismena here !——

[Aside.

*Ism.* Now, my lord, is the queen's rage abated ?  
 How is the prince dispos'd ?

*Lyc.* Happily,

*All's chang'd to love and harmony, my fair.*

" 'Tis all agreed, and now the prince is safe

" From the sure vengeance of despairing love ;"

Now Phædra's rage is chang'd to soft endearments :

She doats, she dies ; and few, but tedious days,

With endless joys will crown the happy pair.

*Ism.* Does he then wed the queen ?

*Lyc.* At least I think so.

I, when the prince approach'd, not far retir'd,

Pale with my doubts : he spoke ; th' attentive queen

Dwelt on his accents, and her gloomy eyes

Sparkled with gentler fires ; he, blushing bow'd,

She, trembling, lost in love, with soft confusion

Receiv'd his passion, and return'd her own.

Then, smiling, turn'd to me, and bade me order

The pompous rites of her ensuing nuptials,

Which I must now pursue. Farewell, Ismena.

[*Exit.*

*Ism.* Then I'll retire, and not disturb their joys.

*Lady.* Stay, and learn more.

*Ism.* Ah ! wherefore should I stay ?

What ! shall I stay to rave, t'upbraid, to hold him ?

To snatch the struggling charmer from her arms ?

For could you think that open gen'rous youth

Could with feign'd love deceive a jealous woman ?

" Could he so soon grow artful in dissembling ?

" Ah ! without doubt his thoughts inspir'd his tongue,

" And all his soul receiv'd a real love.

" Perhaps new graces darted from her eyes,

" Perhaps soft pity charm'd his yielding soul,

" Perhaps her love, perhaps her kingdom charm'd him ;

" Perhaps—alas ! how many things might charm him !

*Lady.* Wait the success : it is not yet decided.

*Ism.* Not yet decided ! did not Lycon tell us

“ How he protested, sigh’d, and look’d, and vow’d ?  
“ How the soft passion languish’d in his eyes ?  
Ay, no, he loves, he doats on Phædra’s charms ;  
Now, now he clasps her to his panting breast,  
“ Now he devours her with his eager eyes,”  
Now grasps her hands, and now he looks, and vows  
The dear false things that charm’d the poor Ismena.  
He comes ; be still, my heart ; the tyrant comes,  
Charming, tho’ false, and lovely in his guilt.

HIPPOLITUS enters.

*Hip.* Why hangs that cloudy sorrow on your brow ?  
Why do you sigh ? why flow your swelling eyes ?  
Those eyes that us’d with joy to view Hippolitus.

*Ism.* My lord, my soul is charm’d with you success.  
You know, my lord, my fears are but for you,  
For your dear life ; and since my death alone  
Can make you safe, that soon shall make you happy.  
“ Yet had you brought less love to Phædra’s arms,  
“ My soul had parted with a less regret,  
“ Blest if surviving in your dear remembrance.”

*Hip.* Your death ! “ my love ! my marriage ! and to  
Phædra !”

Hear me, Ismena.

*Ism.* No, I dare not hear you.  
But tho’ you’ve been thus cruelly unkind,  
Tho’ you have left me for the royal Phædra,  
Yet still my soul o’er-runs with fondness tow’rds you ;  
Yet still I die with joy to save Hippolitus.

*Hip.* Die to save me ! could I outlive Ismena ?

*Ism.* Yes, you’d outlive her in your Phædra’s arms,  
And may you there find ev’ry blooming pleasure !  
Oh, may the gods show’r blessings on thy head !

“ May the gods crown thy glorions arms with conquest,  
“ And all thy peaceful days with sure repose !”  
May’st thou be bless’d with lovely Phædra’s charms,  
And for thy ease forget the lost Ismena !  
“ Farewell, Hippolitus.”

*Hip.* Ismena, stay ;

Stay, hear me speak ; or, by th’ infernal powers,  
I’ll not survive the minute you depart.

*Ism.* What would you say ? ah ! don’t deceive my weakness.

*Hip.* Deceive thee ! why, Ismena, do you wrong me ?  
Why doubt my faith ? O lovely, cruel maid ;  
Why wound my tender soul with harsh suspicion ?  
Oh, by those charming eyes, by thy dear love,  
I neither thought nor spoke, design’d nor promis’d,  
To love, or wed the queen.

*Ism.* Speak on, my lord,  
My honest soul inclines me to believe thee ;  
And much I fear, and much I hope I’ve wrong’d thee.

*Hip.* Then thus. I came and spake, but scarce of love ;  
The easy queen receiv’d my faint address  
With eager hope, and unsuspecting faith.  
Lycon with seeming joy dismiss’d my guards :  
My gen’rous soul disdain’d the mean deceit,  
But still deceiv’d her to obey Ismena.

*Ism.* Art thou then true ? thou art. Oh, pardon me !  
Pardon the errors of a silly maid,  
Wild with her fears, and mad with jealousy ;  
For still that fear, that jealousy was love.  
Haste then, my lord, and save yourself by flight ;  
“ And when you’re absent, when your godlike form  
“ Shall cease to cheer forlorn Ismena’s eyes,  
“ Then let each day, each hour, each minute, bring



“ Some kind remembrance of your constant love ;  
“ Speak of your health, your fortune, and your friends,  
“ (For sure those friends shall have my tenderest wishes)  
“ Speak much of all ; but of thy dear, dear love,  
“ Speak much, speak very much, but still speak on.”

*Hip.* Oh ! thy dear love shall ever be my theme :  
Of that alone I'll talk the live-long day ;  
But thus I'll talk, thus dwelling in thy eyes,  
Tasting the odours of thy fragrant bosom.  
Come then, to crown me with immortal joys,  
Come, be the kind companion of my flight,  
Come, haste with me to leave this fatal shore.  
The bark before prepar'd for my departure  
Expects its freight ; an hundred lusty rowers  
Have wav'd their sinewy arms, and call Hippolitus ;  
The loosen'd canvass trembles with the wind,  
And the sea whitens with auspicious gales.

“ *Ism.* Fly then, my lord, and may the gods protect thee !  
“ Fly, ere insidious Lycon work thy ruin ;  
“ Fly, ere my fondness talk thy life away ;  
“ Fly from the queen.

“ *Hip.* But not from my Ismena.  
“ Why do you force me from your heav'nly sight,  
“ With those dear arms that ought to clasp me to thee ?  
“ *Ism.* Oh, I could rave for ever at my fate !  
“ And with alternate love and fear possess'd,  
“ Now force thee from my arms, now snatch thee to my  
    breast,  
“ And tremble till you go, but die till you return.  
“ Nay, I could go. Ye gods, if I should go,  
“ What would Fame say ? if I should fly alone  
“ With a young lovely prince that charm'd my soul ?  
“ *Hip.* Say you did well to fly a certain ruin,

" To fly the fury of a queen incens'd,  
 " To crown with endless joys the youth that lov'd you.  
 " Oh! by the joys our mutual loves have brought,  
 " By the blest hours I've languish'd at your feet,  
 " By all the love you ever bore Hippolitus,  
 " Come fly from hence, and make him ever happy.  
 " *Is.* Hide me, ye pow'rs! I never shall resist.  
 " *Hip.* Will you refuse me? can I leave behind me  
 " All that inspires my soul, and cheers my eyes?  
 " Will you not go? then here I'll wait my doom.  
 " Come, raving Phædra; bloody Lycon, come!  
 " I offer to your rage this worthless life,  
 " Since 'tis no longer my Ismena's care."

*Is.* Oh! haste away, my lord, I go, I fly  
 Thro' all the dangers of the hoist'rous deep.  
 When the wind whistles thro' the crackling masts,  
 When thro' the yawning ship the foaming sea  
 Rolls bubbling in; then, then I'll clasp thee fast,  
 And in transporting love forget my fear.  
 Oh! I will wander through the Scythian gloom,  
 O'er ice, and hills of everlasting snow;  
 There, when the horrid darkness shall inclose us,  
 When the bleak wind shall chill my shiv'ring limbs,  
 Thou shalt alone supply the distant sun,  
 And cheer my gazing eyes, and warm my heart.

*Hip.* Come, let's away, and like another Jason,  
 I'll bear my beauteous conquest thro' the seas:  
 A greater treasure, and a nobler prize,  
 Than he from Colchis bore. Sleep, sleep in peace,  
 Ye monsters of the woods, on Ida's top  
 Securely roam; no more my early horn  
 Shall wake the lazy day. Transporting love  
 Reigns in my heart, and makes me all its own.

So, when bright Venus yielded up her charms,  
 The blest Adonis languish'd in her arms ;  
 His idle horn on fragrant myrtles hung,  
 His arrows scatter'd, and his bow unstrung :  
 Obscure in coverts lie his dreaming hounds,  
 And bay the fancy'd boar with feeble sounds ;  
 For nobler sports he quits the savage fields,  
 And all the hero to the lover yields.

[*Exeunt.*]

*ACT III. SCENE I.*

*LYCON and Guards enter.*

*Lycon.*

HEAV'N is at last appeas'd : the pitying gods  
 Have heard our wishes, and auspicious Jove  
 Smiles on his native isle ; for Phædra lives,  
 Restor'd to Crete, and to herself, she lives :  
 Joy with fresh strength inspires her drooping limbs,  
 " Revives her charms," and o'er her faded cheeks  
 Spreads " a fresh " rosy bloom ; " as kindly springs  
 " With genial heat renew the frozen earth,  
 " And paint its smiling face with gaudy flow'rs.  
 " But see she comes, the beauteous Phædra comes.

*PHÆDRA and four Ladies enter.*

" How her eyes sparkle ! how their radiant beams  
 " Confess their shining ancestor the sun !"  
 Your charms to-day will wound despairing crowds,  
 And give the pains you suffer'd : nay, Hippolitus,  
 The fierce, the brave, th' insensible Hippolitus,  
 Shall pay a willing homage to your beauty,  
 And in his turn adore.—

*Phæd.* 'Tis flatt'ry all.

Yet when you name the prince, that flattery's pleasing;  
You wish it so, poor good old man, you wish it.

The fertile province of Cydonia's thine:

Is there aught else? has happy Phædra aught

In the wide circle of her far-stretch'd empire?

Ask, take, my friend, secure of no repulse.

Let spacious Crete thro' all her hundred cities

Resound her Phædra's joy. "Let altars smook,

"And richest gums, and spice, and incense roll

"Their fragrant wreaths to Heav'n, to pitying Heav'n,

"Which gives Hippolitus to Phædra's arms.

"Set all at large, and bid the loathsome dungeons

"Give up the meagre slaves that pine in darkness

"And waste in grief, as did despairing Phædra:

"Let them be chear'd, let the starv'd prisoners riot,

"And glow with gen'rous wine."—Let sorrow cease.

Let none be wretched, none, since Phædra's happy.

"But now he comes, and with an equal passion

"Rewards my flame, and springs into my arms!"

*A Messenger enters.*

Say, where's the prince?

*Mess.* He's no where to be found.

*Phæd.* Perhaps he hunts.

*Mess.* He hunted not to-day.

*Phæd.* Ha! have you search'd the walks, the courts, the  
temples?

*Mess.* Search'd all in vain.

*Phæd.* Did he not hunt to-day?

Alas! you told me once before he did not: [*Exit Mess.*

My heart misgives me.

*Lyc.* "So indeed doth mine." *Then my fears were true.*

*Phæd.* Could he deceive me? could that godlike youth  
Design the ruin of a queen that loves?

Oh! he's all truth, his words, his looks, his eyes,  
Open to view his inmost thoughts.—He comes.

Ha! who art thou? whence com'st thou? where's Hippo-  
litus!

*A Messenger enters.*

*Mess.* Madam, Hippolitus with fair Ismena  
Drove tow'rd the port.—

*Phæd.* With fair Ismena!

Curst be her cruel beauty, curst her charms,

Curst all her soothing, fatal, false endearments.

"That heav'nly virgin, that exalted goodness,

"Could see me tortur'd with despairing love,

"With artful tears could mourn my monstrous suff'rings,

"While her base malice plotted my destruction."

*Lyc.* A thousand reasons crowd upon my soul,  
That evidence their love.

"*Phæd.* Yes, yes, they love;

"Why else should he refuse my proffer'd bed?

"Why should one warm'd with youth, and thirst of glory,

"Disdain a soul, a form, a crown like mine?

"*Lyc.*" Where, Lycon, where was then thy boasted  
cunning?

Dull, thoughtless wretch!

*Phæd.* O pains unfelt before!

The grief, despair, the agonies, and pangs,

All the wild fury of distracted love,

Are nought to this—Say, famous politician,

Where, when, and how did their first passion rise?



Where did they breathe their sighs? what shady groves,  
What gloomy woods, conceal'd their hidden loves?  
Alas! they hid it not; the well-pleas'd sun  
With all his beams survey'd their guiltless flame;  
Glad zephyrs wafted their untainted sighs,  
And Ida echo'd their endearing accents.

While I, the shame of nature, hid in darkness,  
Far from the balmy air and cheering light,  
Press'd down my sighs, and dry'd my falling tears,  
Search'd a retreat to mourn, and watch'd to grieve.

*Lyc.* Now cease that grief, and let your injur'd love  
Contrive due vengeance; let majestic Phædra,  
That lov'd the hero, sacrifice the villain.  
Then haste, send forth your ministers of vengeance,  
To snatch the traitor from your rival's arms,  
And force him, trembling, to your awful presence.

*Phæd.* O rightly thought——Dispatch th' attending  
guards;  
Bid them bring forth their instruments of death;  
Darts, engines, flames, and launch into the deep,  
And hurl swift vengeance on the perjur'd slave.

[Exit Messenger.

Where am I, gods? what is't my rage commands?  
Ev'n now he's gone; ev'n now the well-tim'd oars  
With sounding strokes divide the sparkling waves,  
And happy gales assist their speedy flight.  
“Now they embrace, and ardent love enflames  
“Their flushing cheeks, and trembles in their eyes.  
“Now they expose my weakness and my crimes;  
“Now to the sporting croud they tell my follies.

CRATANDER enters.

*Crat.* Sir, as I went to seize the persons order'd,

I met the prince, and with him fair Ismena.  
I seiz'd the prince, who now attends without.

*Phæd.* Haste, bring him in.

*Lyc.* Be quick and seize Ismena. [Exit Cratander.

*HIPPOLITUS enters, with two Guards.*

*Phæd.* Could'st thou deceive me? could a son of Theseus  
Stoop to so mean, so base a vice as fraud?  
Nay, act such monstrous perfidy, yet start  
From promis'd love?

*Hip.* My soul disdain'd a promise.

*Phæd.* But yet your false equivocating tongue,  
Your looks, your eyes, your ev'ry motion promis'd.  
But you are ripe in frauds, and learn'd in falsehoods.

“ Look down, O Theseus, and behold thy son,

“ As Sciron faithless, as Procrustes cruel.

“ Behold the crimes, the tyrants, all the monsters,

“ From which thy valour purg'd the groaning earth,

“ Behold them all in thy own son reviv'd.

“ *Hip.* Touch not my glory, lest you stain your own:

“ I still have strove to make my glorious father

“ Blush, yet rejoice to see himself outdone;

“ To mix my parents in my lineal virtues,

“ As Theseus just, and as Camilla chaste.

“ *Phæd.* The godlike Theseus never was thy parent.

“ No, 'twas some monthly Cappadocian drudge,

“ Obedient to the scourge, and beaten to her arms,

“ Begot thee, traitor, on the chaste Camilla.

“ Camilla chaste! an amazon and chaste!

“ That quits her sex, and yet retains her virtue.

“ See the chaste matron mount the neighing steed;

“ In strict embraces lock the struggling warrior,

“ And choose the lover in the sturdy foe.

*A Messenger enters, and seems to talk earnestly with LYCON.*

“ *Hip.* No; she refus’d the vows of godlike Theseus,  
 “ And chose to stand his arms, not meet his love;  
 “ And doubtful was the fight. The wide Thermoodon  
 “ Heard the huge strokes resound; its frighted waves  
 “ Convey’d the rattling din to distant shores,  
 “ While she alone supported all his war;  
 “ Nor till she sunk beneath his thund’ring arm,  
 “ Beneath which warlike nations bow’d, would yield  
 “ To honest wish’d-for love.

“ *Phæd.* Not so her son;  
 “ Who boldly ventures on forbidden flames,  
 “ On one descended from the cruel Pallas,  
 “ Foe to thy father’s person and his blood;  
 “ Hated by him, of kindred yet more hated,  
 “ The last of all the wicked race he ruin’d.  
 “ In vain a fierce successive hatred reign’d  
 “ Between your sires; in vain, like Cadmus’ race,  
 “ With mingled blood they dy’d the blushing earth.

“ *Hip.* In vain, indeed, since now the war is o’er:  
 “ We, like the Theban race, agree to love,  
 “ And by our mutual flames and future offspring,  
 “ Atone for slaughter past.

“ *Phæd.* Your future offspring!  
 “ Heav’n! what a medley’s this? what dark confusion  
 “ Of blood and death, of murder and relation!  
 “ What joy’t had been to old disabled Theseus,  
 “ When he should take the offspring in his arms?  
 “ Ev’n in his arms to hold an infant Pallas,  
 “ And be upbraided with his grandsire’s fate.”

O barbarous youth!

*Lyc.* Too barbarous I fear.

[*Distant shout.*

Perhaps e'en now his faction's up in arms,  
 Since waving crowds roll onwards tow'rd the palace,  
 And rend the city with tumultuous clamours!  
 Perhaps to murder Phædra and her son,  
 And give the crown to him and his Ismena:  
 But I'll prevent it.

[Exit.

ISMENA brought in by two Gentlemen.

*Phæd.* What! the kind Ismena,  
 That nurs'd me, watch'd my sickness! oh, she watch'd  
 me,  
 As rav'nous vultures watch the dying lion,  
 To tear his heart, and riot in his blood.  
 "Hark, hark, my little infant cries for justice!  
 "Oh! be pleas'd, my babe, thou shalt have justice."  
 Now all the spirits of my godlike race  
 Enflame my soul, and urge me on to vengeance.  
 "Arsamnes, Minos, Jove, th' avenging Sun,  
 "Inspire my fury, and demand my justice.  
 "Oh! you shall have it; thou, Minos, shalt applaud it;  
 "Yes, thou shalt copy it in their pains below."  
 God of revenge, arise.—He comes, he comes;  
 "And shoots himself through all my kindling blood."  
 I have it here.—Now, base perfidious wretch;  
 Now sigh, and weep, and tremble in thy turn.  
 Yes, your Ismena shall appease my vengeance.  
 Ismena dies; and thou her pitying lover  
 Doom'd her to death.—Thou too shalt see her bleed,  
 See her convulsive pangs, and hear her dying groans:  
 Go, glut thy eyes with thy ador'd Ismena,  
 And laugh at dying Phædra.

*Hip.* O Ismena!

*Ism.* Alas! my tender soul would shrink at death,

Shake with its fears, and sink beneath its pains,  
In any cause but this.—But now I'm steel'd,  
And the near danger lessens to my sight.  
Now, if I live, 'tis only for Hippolitus;  
And with an equal joy I'll die to save him.  
“ Yes, for his sake I'll go a willing shade,  
“ And wait his coming in th' Elysian fields;  
“ And there enquire of each descending ghost  
“ Of my lov'd hero's welfare, life, and honour:  
“ That dear remembrance will improve the bliss,  
“ Add to th' Elysian joys, and make that Heav'n more  
happy.”

*Hip.* “ O heav'nly virgin! [*Aside.*]” O imperial Phædra,  
Let your rage fall on this devoted head;  
But spare, oh! spare a guiltless virgin's life:  
“ Think of her youth, her innocence, her virtue;  
“ Think with what warm compassion she bemoan'd you;  
“ Think how she serv'd and watch'd you in your sickness;  
“ How ev'ry rising and descending sun  
“ Saw kind Ismena watching o'er the queen.”  
I only promis'd, I alone deceiv'd you;  
And I, and only I, should feel your justice.

*Ism.* Oh! by those pow'rs to whom I soon must answer  
For all my faults; by that bright arch of heav'n  
I now last see, I wrought him by my wiles,  
By tears, by threats, by ev'ry female art,  
Wrought his disdainful soul to false compliance.  
The son of Theseus could not think of fraud;  
'Twas woman all.

*Phæd.* I see 'twas woman all:  
And woman's fraud should meet with woman's vengeance,  
But yet thy courage, truth, and virtue shock me:  
A love so warm, so firm, so like my own.  
Oh! had the gods so pleas'd, had bounteous heav'n



Bestow'd Hippolitus on Phædra's arms,  
So had I stood the shock of angry fate;  
So had I giv'n my life with joy to save him.

*Hip.* And can you doom her death? can Minos' daughter  
Condemn the virtue which her soul admires?  
Are not you Phædra? once the boast of fame,  
Shame of our sex, and pattern of your own.

*Phæd.* Am I that Phædra? No. Another soul  
Informs my alter'd frame. Could else Ismena  
Provoke my hatred, yet deserve my love?  
Aid me, ye gods, support my sinking glory,  
Restore my reason, and confirm my virtue.  
Yet, is my rage unjust? then, why was Phædra  
Rescu'd for torment, and preserv'd for pain?  
Why did you raise me to the height of joy,  
Above the wreck of clouds and storms below,  
To dash and break me on the ground for ever?

*Ism.* Was it not time to urge him to compliance,  
At least to feign it, when perfidious Lycon  
Confin'd his person and conspir'd his death?

*Phæd.* Confin'd and doom'd to death!—O cruel Lycon!  
Could I have doom'd thy death? could these sad eyes,  
That lov'd thee living, e'er behold thee dead?  
Yet thou could'st see me die without concern,  
Rather than save a wretched queen from ruin.  
“ Else could you choose to trust the warring winds,  
“ The swelling waves, the rocks, the faithless sands,  
“ And all the raging monsters of the deep?”  
Oh! think you see me on the naked shore;  
Think how I scream and tear my scatter'd hair;  
Break from th' embraces of my shrieking maids,  
And harrow on the sand my bleeding bosom:  
Then catch with wide-stretch'd arms the empty billows,  
And headlong plunge into the gaping deep.

*Hip.* O dismal state! my bleeding heart relents,  
And all my thoughts dissolve in tenderest pity.

*Phæd.* If you can pity, oh! refuse not love;  
But stoop to rule in Crete, the seat of heroes,  
And nursery of gods. A hundred cities  
Court thee for lord, "where the rich busy crowds  
"Struggle for passage thro' the spacious streets;  
"Where thousand ships o'ershade the less'ning main,  
"And tire the lab'ring wind. The suppliant nations  
"Bow to its ensigns, and with lower'd sails  
"Confess the ocean's queen. For thee alone  
"The winds shall blow, and the vast ocean roll;  
"For thee alone the fam'd Cydonian warriors  
"From twanging yews shall send their fatal shafts.

"*Hip.* Then let me march their leader, not their prince;  
"And at the head of your renown'd Cydonians  
"Brandish this far-fam'd sword of conqu'ring Theseus;  
"That I may shake th' Egyptian tyrant's yoke  
"From Asia's neck, and fix it on his own;  
"That willing nations may obey your laws;  
"And your bright ancestor, the sun, may shine  
"On nought but Phædra's empire.

"*Phæd.* Why not thine?  
"Dost thou so far detest my proffer'd bed,  
"As to refuse my crown?—O cruel youth!  
"By all the pain that wrings my tortur'd soul,  
"By all the dear deceitful hopes you gave me,  
"O! ease, at least once more delude, my sorrows;  
"For your dear sake I've lost my darling honour;  
"For you, but now, I gave my soul to death;  
"For you I'd quit my crown, and stoop beneath  
"The happy bondage of an humble wife;  
"With thee I'd climb the steepy Ida's summit,

" And in the scorching heat and chilling dews,  
 " O'er hills, o'er vales, pursue the shaggy lion:  
 " Careless of danger, and of wasting toil;  
 " Of pinching hunger, and impatient thirst;  
 " I'll find all joys in thee.

" *Hip.* Why stoops the queen  
 " To ask, intreat, to supplicate, and pray,  
 " To prostitute her crown and sex's honour,  
 " To one whose humble thoughts can only rise  
 " To be your slave, not lord?

*Phæd.* " And is that all?"

See if he deign to force an artful groan!  
 Or call a tear from his unwilling eyes!  
 " Hard as his native rocks, cold as his sword,  
 " Fierce as the wolves that howl'd around his birth!  
 " He hates the tyrant, and the suppliant scorns.  
 " O Heav'n! O Minos! O imperial Jove!  
 " Do ye not blush at my degenerate weakness?"  
 Hence, lazy, mean, ignoble passions fly!  
 Hence from my soul——'Tis gone, 'tis fled for ever,  
 And heav'n inspires my thoughts with righteous vengeance.  
 Thou shalt no more despise my offer'd love;  
 No more Ismena shall upbraid my weakness.

[*Catches Hippolitus's sword to stab herself.*]

Now, all ye kindred gods, look down and see  
 How I'll revenge you, and myself, on Phædra.

*LYCON enters, and snatches away the sword.*

*Lyc.* Horror on horror! Theseus is return'd.

*Phæd.* Theseus! then what have I to do with life?  
 May I be snatch'd with winds, by earth o'erwhelm'd,  
 Rather than view the face of injur'd Theseus.  
 Now wider still my groaning horrors spread,

My fame, my virtue, nay my phrenzy's fled :  
Then view thy wretched race, imperial Jove,  
If crimes enrage you, or misfortunes move ;  
On me your flames, on me your bolts employ,  
Me if your anger spares, your pity should destroy.

[*Runs off.*]

*Lyc.* This may do service yet.

[*Exit Lycon, carries off the sword.*]

*Hip.* Is he return'd? thanks to the pitying gods!  
Shall I again behold his awful eyes?  
Again be folded in his loving arms?  
Yet in the midst of joy I fear for Phædra:  
I fear his warmth and unrelenting justice.  
Oh! should her raging passion reach his ears,  
His tender love, by anger fir'd, would turn  
To burning rage; [*trumpets sound*] "as soft Cydonian oil,  
"Whose balmy juice glides o'er th' untasting tongue,  
"Yet touch'd with fire, with hottest flames will blaze."  
But oh! ye pow'rs! I see his godlike form.  
O ecstasy of joy; he comes! he comes!

*THESEUS enters, with Officers and Guards.*

Is it my lord? my father? oh! tis he:  
"I see him, touch him," feel his known embraces;  
See all the father in his joyful eyes.  
Where have you been, my lord? what angry dæmon  
Hid you from Crete? from me? what god has sav'd you?  
Did not Philotas see you fall? oh, answer me;  
And then I'll ask a thousand questions more.

*Thes.* No; but to save my life I feign'd my death:  
My horse and well-known arms confirm'd the tale,  
And hinder'd farther search. This honest Greek,

Conceal'd me in his house, and cur'd my wounds ;  
 Procur'd a vessel, and, to bless me more,  
 Accompanied my flight——

But this at leisure. Let me now indulge  
 A father's fondness ; let me snatch thee thus,  
 Thus fold thee in my arms. Such, such, was I

[*Embraces Hippolitus.*]

When first I saw thy mother, chaste Camilla ;  
 And much she lov'd me. Oh ! did Phædra view me  
 With half that fondness !——But she's still unkind,  
 Else hasty joy had brought her to these arms,  
 To welcome me to liberty, to life,  
 And make that life a blessing. Come, my son,  
 Let us to Phædra.

*Hip.* Pardon me, my lord.

*Thei.* Forget her former treatment : she's too good  
 Still to persist in hatred to my son.

*Hip.* Oh ! let me fly from Crete,—from you, [*Aside*] and  
 Phædra.

*Thei.* My son, what means this turn ! this sudden start !  
 Why would you fly from Crete, and from your father ?

*Hip.* Not from my father, but from lazy Crete ;  
 To follow danger, and acquire renown ;  
 To quell the monsters that escap'd your sword,  
 And make the world confess me Theseus' son.

*Thei.* What can this coldness mean ?—Retire, my son,

[*Exit Hippolitus.*]

While I attend the queen.—What shock is this ?  
 Why tremble thus my limbs ? why faints my heart ?  
 Why am I thrill'd with fear, 'till now unknown ?  
 Where's now the joy, the ecstasy, and transport,  
 That warm'd my soul, and urg'd me on to Phædra ?  
 Oh, had I never lov'd her, I'd been blest.



*Sorrow and joy in love alternate reign ;  
Sweet is the bliss, distracting is the pain.*

*" So when the Nile its fruitful deluge spreads,*

*" And genial heat informs its slimy beds ;*

*" Here yellow harvests crown the fertile plain,*

*" There monstrous serpents fright the lab'ring swain :*

*" A various product fills the fatten'd sand,*

*" And the same floods enrich and curse the land.*

[Exit.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

LYCON enters, solus.

*Lycon.*

THIS may gain time 'till all my wealth's embark'd,  
To ward my foes revenge, and finish mine,  
To shake that empire which I can't possess.  
But then the queen—she dies—why let her die ;  
Let wide destruction seize on all together,  
So Lycon live—A safe triumphant exile,  
Great in disgrace, and envied in his fall.  
The queen ! then try thy art and work her passions.

PHÆDRA and Ladies enter.

Draw her to act what most her soul abhors ;  
Possess her whole, and speak thyself in Phædra.

*Phæd.* Off, let me loose ; why, cruel barb'rous maids,  
Why am I barr'd from death, the common refuge,  
That spreads its hospitable arms for all ?

*" Why must I drag the insufferable load*

*" Of foul dishonour, and despairing love ?"*

O length of pain ! *" am I so often dying,*

“ And yet not dead ? ” feel I so oft death’s pangs,  
Nor once can find its ease ?

*Lyc.* Would you now die ?

Now quit the field to your insulting foe ?  
Then shall he triumph o’er your blasted name :  
Ages to come, the universe shall learn  
The wide immortal infamy of Phædra :  
And the poor babe, the idol of your soul,  
The lovely image of your dear dead lord,  
Shall be upbraided with his mother’s crimes ;  
Shall bear your shame, shall sink beneath your faults,  
Inherit your disgrace, but not your crown.

*Phæd.* Must he too fall, involv’d in my destruction,  
And only live to curse the name of Phædra ?  
O dear, unhappy babe ! “ must I bequeath thee  
“ Only a sad inheritance of woe ? ”  
Gods ! cruel gods ! can’t all my pains atone,  
Unless they reach my infant’s guiltless head ?  
O lost estate ! “ when life’s so sharp a torment,  
“ And death itself can’t ease ? ”—Assist me, Lycon ;  
Advise, speak comfort to my troubled soul.

*Lyc.* ’Tis you must drive that trouble from your soul ;  
“ As streams when damm’d forget their ancient current,  
“ And wand’ring o’er their banks in other channels flow ; ”  
’Tis you must bend your thoughts from hopeless love,  
And turn their course to Theseus’ happy bosom,  
“ And crown his eager hopes with wish’d enjoyment : ”  
Then with fresh charms adorn your troubled looks,  
Display the beauties first inspir’d his soul,  
Sooth with your voice, and woo him with your eyes.

*Phæd.* Impossible ! “ what, woo him with these eyes,  
“ Still wet with tears that flow’d—but not for Theseus ?  
“ This tongue so us’d to sound another name ?

“ What, take him to my arms? O awful Juno!  
 “ Touch, love, caress him, while my wand’ring fancy  
 “ On other objects strays? a lewd adultress  
 “ In the chaste bed? and in the father’s arms,  
 “ (O horrid thought! O execrable incest!)  
 “ Ev’n in the father’s arms, embrace the son?”

*Lyc.* Yet you must see him, “ lest impatient love  
 “ Should urge his temper to too nice a search,  
 “ And ill-tim’d absence should disclose your crime.

“ *Phæd.* Could I when present to his awful eyes,  
 “ Conceal the wild disorders of my soul?  
 “ Would not my groans, my looks, my speech betray me?  
 “ Betray thee, Phædra! then thou’rt not betray’d.  
 “ Live, live secure, adoring Crete conceals thee;  
 “ Thy pious love, and most endearing goodness  
 “ Will charm the kind Hippolitus to silence.  
 “ O wretched Phædra! O ill-guarded secret!  
 “ To foes alone disclos’d!

“ *Lyc.* I needs must fear them,  
 “ Spite of their vows, their oaths, their imprecations.

“ *Phæd.* Do imprecations, oaths, or vows avail?  
 “ I too have sworn, ev’n at the altar sworn,  
 “ Eternal love and endless faith to Theseus;  
 “ And yet am false, forsworn: the hallow’d shrine  
 “ That heard me swear, is witness to my falsehood.  
 “ The youth, the very author of my crimes,  
 “ Ev’n he shall tell the fault himself inspir’d;  
 “ The fatal eloquence that charm’d my soul  
 “ Shall lavish all its arts to my destruction.”

*Lyc.* Hippolitus, oh, he will tell it all—Destruction  
 seize him.

With seeming grief, and aggravating pity,  
 And more to blacken, will excuse your folly;

False tears shall wet his unrelenting eyes,  
 And his glad heart with artful sighs shall heave;  
 Then Theseus—How will indignation swell  
 His mighty heart! how his majestic frame  
 Will shake with rage too fierce, too swift for vent!

*While the proud Scythian——*

“How he’ll expose you to the public scorn;  
 “And loathing crowds shall murmur out their horror!  
 “Then the fierce Scythian—now methinks I see  
 “His fiery eyes with sullen pleasures glow,  
 “Survey your tortures, and insult your pangs:  
 “I see him, smiling on the pleas’d Ismena,  
 “Point out with scorn the once-proud tyrant Phædra.”

*Phæd.* Curst be his name! may infamy attend him!  
 May swift destruction fall upon his head,  
 Hurl’d by the hand of those he most adores.

*Lyc.* By heav’n, prophetic truth inspires your tongue;  
 “He shall endure the shame he means to give;”  
 For all the torments which he heaps on you,  
 With just revenge, shall Theseus turn on him.

*Phæd.* Is’t possible? O Lycon! O my refuge!  
 O good old man! thou oracle of wisdom!  
 Declare the means, that Phædra may adore thee.

*Lyc.* Accuse him first.

*Phæd.* O heav’n’s! accuse the guiltless?

*Lyc.* Then be accus’d: let Theseus know your crime;  
 Let lasting infamy o’erwhelm your glory;  
 Let your foe triumph, and your infant fall——  
 “Shake off this idle lethargy of pity;  
 “With ready war prevent th’ invading foe;  
 “Preserve your glory, and secure your vengeance:  
 “Be yours the fruit, security, and ease—  
 “The guilt, the danger, and the labour mine.”

*Phæd.* Heav'n's! Theseus comes.

*Lyc.* Declare your last resolves.

*Phæd.* Do you resolve, for Phædra can do nothing. [*Exit.*]

*Lyc.* Now, Lycon, heighten his impatient love;  
Now raise his pity, now enflame his rage;  
Quicken his hopes, then quash 'em with despair;  
Work his tumultuous passions into phrenzy;  
Unite them all, then turn them on the foe.

THESEUS enters.

*Thes.* Was that my queen, my wife, my idol Phædra?  
Does she still shun me? O injurious Heav'n!  
Why did you give me back again to life?  
Why did you save me from the rage of battle,  
To let me fall by her more fatal hatred?

*Lyc.* Her hatred! no; she loves you with such fondness  
As none but that of Theseus e'er could equal:

" Yet so the gods have doom'd, so Heav'n will have it;

" She ne'er must view her much-lov'd Theseus more.

" *Thes.* Not see her! by my sufferings but I will,

" Tho' troops embattled should oppose my passage,

" And ready death shall guard the fatal way.

" Not see her! oh! I'll clasp her in these arms,

" Break through the idle bands that yet have held me,

" And seize the joys my honest love may claim.

" *Lyc.* Is this a time for joy, when Phædra's grief——

" *Thes.* Is this a time for grief? is this my welcome

" To air, to life, to liberty, and Crete?

" Not this I hop'd, when urg'd by ardent love,

" I wing'd my eager way to Phædra's arms;

" Then to my thoughts relenting Phædra flew,

" With open arms to welcome my return;

" With kind endearing blame condemn'd my rashness,



“ And made me swear to venture out no more.  
“ Oh ! my warm soul, my boiling fancy glow’d  
“ With charming hopes of yet untasted joys ;  
“ New pleasures fill’d my mind ; all dangers, pains,  
“ Wars, wounds, defeats, in that dear hope were lost.  
“ And does she now avoid my eager love ?  
“ Pursue me still with unrelenting hatred ?  
“ Invent new pains ? detest, loath, shun my sight ?  
“ Fly my return, and sorrow for my safety ?

“ *Lyc.* Oh, think not so ! for, by th’ unerring gods,”  
When first I told her of your wish’d return,  
When the lov’d sound of Theseus reach’d her ears,  
At that dear name she rear’d her drooping head,  
“ Her feeble hands, and wat’ry eyes to heav’n,  
“ To bless the bounteous gods : at that dear name  
“ The raging tempest of her grief was calm’d ;”  
Her sighs were hush’d, and tears forgot to flow.

*Thes.* Did my return bring comfort to her sorrow ?  
Then haste, conduct me to the lovely mourner.  
Oh, I will kiss the pearly drops away ;  
“ Suck from her rosy lips the fragrant sighs :  
“ With other sighs her panting breast shall heave,  
“ With other dews her swimming eyes shall melt,”  
With other pangs her throbbing heart shall beat,  
And all her sorrows shall be lost in love.

*Lyc.* Does Theseus burn with such unheard of passion ;  
And shall not she with out-stretch’d arms receive him ;  
“ And with an equal ardour meet his vows ?  
“ The vows of one so dear !” O righteous gods !  
Why must the bleeding heart of Theseus bear  
Such tort’ring pangs ? while Phædra, dead to love,  
Now with accusing eyes on angry Heav’n  
Stedfastly gazes, and upbraids the gods ;

“ Now with dumb piercing grief and humble shame,  
 “ Fixes her gloomy watry orbs to earth ;  
 “ Now burst with swelling anguish, rends the skies”  
 With loud complaints of her outrageous wrongs.

*Thes.* Wrongs ! is she wrong’d ? and lives he yet who  
 wrong’d her ?

*Lyc.* He lives so great, so happy, so belov’d,  
 That Phædra scarce can hope, scarce wish revenge.

*Thes.* Shall Theseus live, and not revenge his Phædra ?  
 Gods ! shall this arm, renown’d for righteous vengeance,  
 For quelling tyrants, and redressing wrongs,  
 Now fail ? now first, when Phædra’s injur’d, fail ?  
*O let us haste.*

“ Speak, Lycon, haste, declare the secret villain,  
 “ The wretch so meanly base to injure Phædra,  
 “ So rashly brave to dare the sword of Theseus.

“ *Lyc.* I dare not speak, but sure her wrongs are mighty.  
 “ The pale cold hue that deadens all her charms,  
 “ Her sighs, her hollow groans, her flowing tears,  
 “ Make me suspect her monstrous grief will end her.

“ *Thes.* End her ! end Theseus first, and all mankind ;  
 “ But most that villain, that detested slave,  
 “ That brutal coward, that dark lurking wretch.

“ *Lyc.* Oh, noble heat of unexampled love !  
 “ This Phædra hop’d, when, in the midst of grief,  
 “ In the wild torrent of o’erwhelming sorrows,  
 “ She, groaning, still invok’d, still call’d on Theseus.

“ *Thes.* Did she then name me ? did the weeping char-  
 mer

“ Invoke my name, and call for aid on Theseus ?  
 “ Oh ! that lov’d voice upbraided my delay.  
 “ Why then this stay ?” I come, I fly, O Phædra !  
 Lead on.—Now, dark disturber of my peace,

If now thou'rt known, what luxury of vengeance—  
Haste, lead, conduct me.

*Lyc.* Oh! I beg you stay.

*Thes.* What, stay when Phædra calls?"

*Lyc.* "Oh! on my lance,

"By all the gods, my lord, I beg you stay;"

*Oh! I conjure you stay,*

As you respect your peace, your life, your glory;

"As Phædra's days are precious to your soul;"

By all your love, by Phædra's sorrows stay.

*Thes.* Where lies the danger? wherefore should I stay?

*Lyc.* Your sudden presence would surprise her soul,  
Renew the galling image of her wrongs,

"Revive her sorrow, indignation, shame;"

And all your son would strike her from your eyes.

*Thes.* My son!—But he's too good, too brave to wrong  
her.——

Whence then that shocking change, that strong surprize,  
That fright that seiz'd him at the name of Phædra?

*Lyc.* Was he surpriz'd? that shew'd at least remorse.

*Thes.* Remorse! for what? by Heav'n's, my troubled  
thoughts

Presage some dire attempts.—Say, what remorse?

*Lyc.* I would not—yet I must: this you command;  
This Phædra orders: thrice her fault'ring tongue  
Bid me unfold the guilty scene to Theseus;  
Thrice with loud cries recall'd me on my way,  
And blam'd my speed, and chid my rash obedience,  
"Lest the unwelcome tale should wound your peace."

At last, with looks serenely sad, she cried:

Go tell it all; but in such artful words,  
Such tender accents, and such melting sounds,  
As may appease his rage, and move his pity;

As may incline him to forgive his son  
A grievous fault, but still a fault of love.

*Thes.* Of love! what strange suspicions rack my soul!  
As you regard my peace, declare what love!

*Lyc.* Thus urg'd, I must declare. Yet, pitying Heav'n!  
Why must I speak? why must unwilling Lycon  
Accuse the prince of impious love to Phædra?

*Thes.* Love to his mother! to the wife of Theseus!

*Lyc.* Yes; at the moment first he view'd her eyes,  
Ev'n at the altar, when you join'd your hands,  
His easy heart receiv'd the guilty flame,  
And from that time he prest her with his passion.

*Thes.* Then 'twas for this she banish'd him from Crete;  
I thought it hatred all. O righteous hatred!  
Forgive me, Heav'n; forgive me, injur'd Phædra,  
That I in secret have condemn'd thy justice.  
Oh! 'twas all just, and Theseus shall revenge,  
Ev'n on his son, revenge his Phædra's wrongs.

*Lyc.* What easy tools are these blunt honest heroes,  
Who with keen hunger gorge the naked hook,  
Prevent the bait the statesman's art prepares,  
And post to ruin.—“Go, believing fool,  
“Go act thy far-fam'd justice on thy son,  
“Next on thyself, and both make way for Lycon.” [*Aside.*

*Thes.* Ha! am I sure she's wrong'd? perhaps 'tis malice.  
Slave, make it clear, make good your accusation,  
Or treble fury shall revenge my son.

*Lyc.* Am I then doubted? can Phædra or your Lycon  
Be thought to forge such execrable falsehoods?

“Gods! when the queen unwillingly complains,  
“Can you suspect her truth? O godlike Theseus!  
“Is this the love you bear unhappy Phædra?  
“Is this her hop'd-for aid? Go, wretched matron,

“ Sigh to the winds, and rend th’ unpitying heav’n’s  
“ With thy vain sorrows ; since relentless Theseus,  
“ Thy hope, thy refuge, Theseus will not hear thee.”

*Thes.* “ Not hear my Phædra ! not revenge her wrongs !”  
Speak, make thy proofs, and then his doom’s as fix’d,  
As when Jove nods, and high Olympus shakes,  
And fate his voice obeys.

*Lyc.* *Yet stay ;* bear witness, Heav’n ! [*Fetches a sword.*]  
With what reluctance I produce this sword,  
This fatal proof against th’ unhappy prince,  
Lest it should work your justice to his ruin,  
And prove he aim’d at force as well as incest.

*Thes.* Gods ; ’tis illusion all ! “ Is this the sword  
“ By which Procrustes, Scyron, Pallas fell ?  
“ Is this the weapon which my darling son  
“ Swore to employ in nought but acts of honour ?  
“ Now, faithful youth, thou nobly hast fulfill’d  
“ Thy gen’rous promise. Oh, most injur’d Phædra !  
“ Why did I trust to his deceitful form ?  
“ Why blame thy justice, or suspect thy truth ?”

*Lyc.* Had you this morn beheld his ardent eyes,  
Seen his arm lock’d in her dishevelled air,  
That weapon glitt’ring o’er her trembling bosom,  
Whilst she with screams refus’d his impious love,  
Entreating death, and rising to the wound !  
“ Oh ! had you seen her, when the affrighted youth  
“ Retir’d at your approach ; had you then seen her,  
“ In the chaste transports of becoming fury,  
“ Seize on the sword to pierce her guiltless bosom ;”  
Had you seen this, you could not doubt her truth.

*Thes.* Oh, impious monster ! oh, forgive me, Phædra !  
And may the gods inspire my injur’d soul  
With equal vengeance that may suit his crimes.



*Lyc.* For Phædra's sake forbear to talk of vengeance ;  
That with new pains would wound her tender breast.  
Send him away from Crete, and by his absence  
Give Phædra quiet, and afford him mercy.

*Thes.* " Mercy ! for what ? oh ! well has he rewarded  
" Poor Phædra's mercy.—O most barb'rous traitor !  
" To wrong such beauty, and insult such goodness."  
Mercy ! what's that ? a virtue coin'd by villains,  
" Who praise the weakness which supports their crimes."  
Be mute, and fly ; lest when my rage is rous'd,  
Thou for thyself in vain implore my mercy.

*Lyc.* Dull fool, I laugh at mercy more than thou dost ;  
More than I do the justice thou'rt so fond of.  
Now come, young hero, to thy father's arms,  
Receive the due reward of haughty virtue ;  
Now boast thy race, and laugh at earth-born Lycon.

[*Aside and Exit.*

HIPPOLITUS enters.

*Thes.* Yet can it be ?—Is this th' incestuous villain ?  
" How great his presence, how erect his look,  
" How ev'ry grace, how all his virtuous mother  
" Shines in his face, and charms me from his eyes !  
" O Neptune ! O great founder of our race !  
" Why was he fram'd with such a godlike look ?"  
Why wears he not some most detested form,  
" Baleful to sight, as horrible to thought ;"  
That I might act my justice without grief,  
Punish the villain, nor regret the son ?

*Hip.* May I presume to ask, what secret care  
Broods in your breast, and clouds your royal brow ?  
Why dart your awful eyes those angry beams,

And fright Hippolitus they us'd to cheer?

*Thes.* Answer me first. When call'd to wait on Phædra,  
What sudden fear surpriz'd your troubled soul?  
Why did your ebbing blood forsake your cheeks?  
Why did you hasten from your father's arms,  
To shun the queen your duty bids you please?

*Hip.* My lord, to please the queen I'm forc'd to shun her,  
And keep this hated object from her sight.

*Thes.* Say, what's the cause of her invet'rate hatred?

*Hip.* My lord, as yet I never gave her cause.

*Thes.* "O were it so!" [*Aside.*] When last did you  
attend her?

*Hip.* When last attend her!—O unhappy queen!  
Your error's known; yet I disdain to wrong you,  
"Or to betray a fault myself have caus'd."  
When last attend her?

[*Aside.*

*Thes.* Answer me directly;  
Nor dare to trifle with your father's rage.

*Hip.* My lord, this very morn I saw the queen.

*Thes.* What past?

*Hip.* I ask'd permission to retire.

*Thes.* And was that all?

*Hip.* My lord, I humbly beg,  
With the most low submissions, ask no more.

*Thes.* "Yet you don't answer with your low submissions."

Answer, or never hope to see me more.

*Hip.* Too much he knows, I fear, without my telling:  
And the poor queen's betray'd, and lost for ever. [*Aside.*

*Thes.* He changes, gods! and falters at the question.  
His fears, his words, his looks declare him guilty. [*Aside.*

*Hip.* Why do you frown, my lord? why turn away,  
As from some loathsome monster, not your son?

*Thes.* 'Thou art that monster, and no more my son.  
Not one of those of the most horrid form,  
Of which my hand has eas'd the burthen'd earth,  
Was half so shocking to my sight as thou.

*Hip.* Where am I, gods? is that my father Theseus?  
"Am I awake?" am I Hippolitus.

*Thes.* Thou art that fiend—Thou art Hippolitus.  
Thou art.—O fall! O fatal stain to honour!  
How had my vain imagination form'd thee?  
Brave as Alcides, and as Minos just.  
Sometimes it led me through the maze of war;  
There it survey'd thee ranging thro' the field,  
Mowing down troops, and dealing out destruction.  
"Sometimes with wholesome laws reforming states,  
"Crowning their happy joys with peace and plenty;"  
While you——

*Hip.* With all my father's soul inspir'd,  
Burnt with impatient thirst of early honour,  
To hunt thro' bloody fields the chace of glory,  
And bless your age with trophies like your own.  
Gods, how that warm'd me! how my throbbing heart  
Leap'd to the image of my father's joy,  
When you should strain me in your folding arms,  
And with kind raptures, "and with sobbing joys,  
"Commend my valour, and confess your son!  
"How did I think my glorious toil o'erpaid?  
"Then great indeed, and in my father's love,  
"With more than conquest crown'd?"

Cry, 'Go on, Hippolitus.  
Go tread the rugged paths of daring honour;  
Practise all the strictest and austere virtue,  
And all the rigid laws of righteous Minos:  
Theseus, thy father Theseus will reward thee.'

*Thes.* Reward thee!—Yes; as Minos would reward thee.

Was Minos then thy pattern? and did Minos,  
The great, the good, the just, the righteous M inos,  
“The judge of hell, and oracle of earth,”  
Did he inspire adultery, force, and incest?

“*ISMENA appears.*”

“*Ism.* Ha! what’s this?”

[*Aside.*”

*Hip.* Amazement! incest!

*Thes.* Incest with Phædra, with thy mother Phædra.

*Hip.* This charge so unexpected, so amazing,  
So new, so strange, impossible to thought,  
Stuns my astonish’d soul, and ties my voice.

*Thes.* Then let this wake thee, this once glorious sword,  
With which thy father arm’d thy infant hand,  
Not for this purpose. O abandon’d slave!  
O early villain! most detested coward!  
With this my instrument of youthful glory!  
With this t’ invade the spotless Phædra’s honour!—  
Phædra, my life, my better half, my queen!  
That very Phædra, for whose just defence  
The gods would claim thy sword.

*Hip.* Amazement! death!

Heav’ns! durst I raise the far-fam’d sword of Theseus  
Against his queen, against my mother’s bosom?

*Thes.* If not; declare when, where, and how you lost it?  
How Phædra gain’d it?—O all ye gods! he’s silent.  
Why was it bar’d? whose bosom was it aim’d at?  
What meant thy arm advanc’d, thy glowing cheeks,  
Thy hand, heart, eyes? O villain! monstrous villain!

*Hip.* Is there no way, “no thought, no beam of light?”  
“No clue to guide me thro’ this gloomy maze”

To clear my honour, yet preserve my faith?

"None, none, ye pow'rs! and must I groan beneath

"This execrable hoard of foul dishonour?

"Must Theseus suffer such unheard of torture?

"Theseus, my father! No." I'll break thro' all;

All oaths, all vows, all idle imprecations

I'll give them to the winds. Hear me, my Lord;

Hear your wrong'd son. The sword—O fatal vow!

"Ensnaring oaths, and thou, rash thoughtless fool,

"To bind thyself in voluntary chains;

"Yet to thy fatal trust continue firm!

"Beneath disgrace, tho' infamous, yet honest."

Yet hear me, father: May the righteous gods

Show'r all their curses on this wretched head;

Oh, may they doom me——

*Thes.* Yes, the gods will doom thee.

The sword, the sword!—Now swear, and call to witness

Heav'n, hell, and earth, I mark it not from one

That breathes beneath such complicated guilt.

*Hip.* Was that like guilt, when with expanded arms

I sprang to meet you at your wish'd return?

Does this appear like guilt, when thus serene,

With eyes erect, and visage unappall'd,

Fix'd on that awful face, I stand the charge,

Amaz'd, not fearing? "Say, if I am guilty;

"Where are the conscious looks, the face now pale,

"Now flushing red, the down-cast haggard eyes,

"Or fix'd on earth, or slowly rais'd to catch

"A fearful view, then sunk again with horror?

"*Thes.* This is for raw, untaught, unfinish'd villains.

"Thou in thy bloom hast reach'd th' abhor'd perfection:

"Thy even looks could wear a peaceful calm,

"The beauteous stamp (O Heav'ns!) of faultless virtue,



" While thy foul heart contriv'd this horrid deed !  
 " O harden'd fiend ! I'll hear no more !  
 " Disturb thy soul, or ruffle thy smooth brow !  
 " What, no remorse ! no qualms ! no pricking pangs !  
 " No feeble struggle of rebelling honour !  
 " Oh ! 'twas thy joy, thy secret hoard of bliss,  
 " To dream, to ponder, act it o'er in thought ;  
 " To doat, to dwell on ; as rejoicing misers  
 " Brood o'er their precious stores of secret gold."

*Hip.* Must I not speak ? Then say, unerring Heav'n,  
 Why was I born with such a thirst of glory ?  
 Why did this morning dawn to my dishonour ?  
 Why did not pitying fate, with ready death,  
 Prevent the guilty day ?

*Thes.* Guilty indeed.

Ev'n at the time you heard your father's death,  
 " And such a father (O immortal gods !)  
 " As held thee dearer than his life and glory !  
 " When thou should'st rend the skies with clam'rous grief,  
 " Beat thy sad breast, and tear thy starting hair ;"  
 Then to my bed to force your impious way ;  
 " With horrid lust t'insult my yet warm urn ;"  
 Make me the scorn of hell, and sport for fiends !  
 These are the fun'ral honours paid to Theseus ;  
 These are the sorrows, these the hallow'd rites,  
 To which you'd call your father's hov'ring spirit.

*ISMENA enters.*

*Ism.* Hear me, my lord, ere yet you fix his doom :

[Turning to Theseus.

Hear one that comes to shield his injur'd honour,  
 And guard his life with hazard of her own.

*Thes.* Tho' thou'rt the daughter of my hated foe.

"Tho' ev'n thy beauty's loathsome to my eyes,"  
Yet justice bids me hear thee.

*Ism.* Thus I thank you.

[*Kneels.*

Then know, mistaken prince, his honest soul  
Could ne'er be sway'd by impious love to Phædra,  
Since I before engag'd his early vows;

"With all my wiles subdu'd his struggling heart;  
"For long his duty struggled with his love."

*Thes.* Speak; is this true? on thy obedience, speak.

*Hip.* So charg'd, I own the dang'rous truth; I own  
Against her will I lov'd the fair Ismena.

*Thes.* Canst thou be only clear'd by disobedience,  
And justified by crimes? What, love my foe?

"Love one descended from a race of tyrants;

"Whose blood yet reeks on my avenging sword!"

I'm curst each moment I delay thy fate.

Haste to the shades, "and tell the happy Pallas

"Ismena's flames, and let him taste such joys

"As thou giv'st me;" go tell applauding Minos

The pious love you bore his daughter Phædra;

Tell it the chatt'ring ghosts, and hissing furies;

Tell it the grinning fiends, till hell sound nothing

To thy pleas'd ears but Phædra, thy mother Phædra!

*Here, guards.*

CRATANDER and Guards enter.

Seize him, Cratander; take this guilty sword,

Let his own hand avenge the crimes it acted,

And bid him die, at least, like Theseus' son.

Take him away, and execute my orders.

*Hip.* Heav'ns! how that strikes me! how it wounds my  
soul

To think of your unutterable sorrows,

When you shall find Hippolitus was guiltless !  
Yet when you know the innocence you doom'd ;  
When you shall mourn your son's unhappy fate,  
Oh, I beseech you, by the love you bore me,  
With my last words (my words will then prevail)  
Oh, for my sake, forbear to touch your life,  
Nor wound again Hippolitus in Theseus.

" Let all my virtues, all my joys survive

" Fresh in your breast, but be my woes forgot ;

" The woes which fate, and not my father, wrought.

" Oh, let me dwell for ever in your thoughts ;

" Let me be honour'd still, but not deplor'd."

*Thes.* " Then thy chief care is for thy father's life.

" O blooming hypocrite ! O young dissembler !

" Well hast thou shewn the care thou tak'st of Theseus."

O all ye gods ! how this enflames my fury.

I scarce can hold my rage ! my eager hands

Tremble to reach thee. No, dishonour'd Theseus,

Blot not thy fame with such a monster's blood.

Snatch him away.

*Hip.* Lead on. Farewell, Ismena.

[*Exit guarded.*

*Ism.* Oh ! take me with him ; let me share his fate."

O awful Theseus ! yet revoke his doom.

" See, see the very ministers of death,

" Tho' bred to blood, yet shrink, and wish to save him."

*Thes.* Slaves, villains, drag her away.

" *Ism.* Oh, tear me, cut me, till my sever'd limbs

" Grow to my lord, and share the pains he suffers.

" *Thes.* Villains, away !"

*Ism.* O, Theseus ! hear me, hear me.

" *Thes.* Away, nor taint me with thy loathsome touch.

" Off, woman.

" *Ism.*" Oh let me stay ! I'll tell you all. "[*Exit Theseus.*

" Already gone. Tell it, ye conscious walls ;

" Bear it, ye winds, upon your pitying wings;  
 " Resound it, Fame, with all your hundred tongues.  
 " O hapless youth! all heaven conspires against you.  
 " The conscious walls conceal the fatal secret;  
 " Th' untainted winds refuse th' infecting load,  
 " And Fame itself is mute. Nay, ev'n Ismena,  
 " Thy own Ismena's sworn to thy destruction.  
 " But still, whate'er the cruel gods design,  
 " In the same fate our equal stars combine,  
 " And he who dooms thy death pronounces mine."

*Thes. Too well I know the truth;  
 What could she tell me but fictitious art,  
 By woman's art deriv'd to turn the course  
 Of justice from a wretch, whose death both gods  
 And men demand of Theseus.*

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ACT V. SCENE I.

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PHÆDRA and LYCON enter.

*Lycon.*

ACCUSE yourself! On my knees I beg you,  
 By all the gods, recal the fatal message.  
 Heav'ns! will you stand the dreaded rage of Theseus?  
 And brand your fame, and work your own destruction?

*Phæd.* By thee I'm branded, and by thee destroy'd;  
 Thou bosom serpent, thou alluring fiend!  
 Yet sha'n't you boast the miseries you cause,  
 Nor 'scape the ruin you have brought on all.

*Lyc.* Was it not your command? has faithful Lycon  
 E'er spoke, e'er thought, " design'd, contriv'd, or acted?  
 " Has he done aught" without the queen's consent?

“ *Phæd.* Plead’st thou consent to what thou first inspir’dst?  
 “ Was that consent? O senseless politician!  
 “ When adverse passions struggle in my breast,  
 “ When anger, fear, love, sorrow, guilt, despair,  
 “ Drove out my reason, and usurp’d my soul.  
 “ Yet this consent you plead, O faithless Lycon!  
 “ Oh, only zealous for the fame of Phædra!  
 “ With this you blot my name, and clear your own;  
 “ And what’s my phrenzy shall be call’d my crime.  
 “ What then is thine! thou cool, deliberate villain,  
 “ Thou wise, fore-thinking, weighing politician?

*Lyc.* Oh! ’twas so black a charge, my tongue recoil’d  
 At its own sound, and horror shook my soul.  
 Yet still, though pierc’d with such amazing anguish,  
 Such was my zeal, so much I lov’d my queen,  
 I broke thro’ all to save the life of Phædra.

*Phæd.* What’s life? O all ye gods! can life atone  
 For all the monstrous crimes by which ’tis bought?  
 Or can I live, when thou, O soul of honour!  
 O early hero! by my crimes art ruin’d?  
 Perhaps ev’n now the great unhappy youth  
 Falls by the sordid hands of butchering villains;  
 Now, now he bleeds, he dies.—“ O perjur’d traitor!  
 “ See, his rich blood in purple torrents flows,  
 “ And Nature sallies in unbidden groans;  
 “ Now mortal pangs distort his lovely form;  
 “ His rosy beauties fade, his starr’d eyes  
 “ Nor darkling swim, and fix their closing beams;  
 “ Now in short gasps his lab’ring spirit heaves,  
 “ And weakly flutters on his fault’ring tongue,  
 “ And struggles into sound.” Hear, monster, hear,  
 With his last breath he curses perjur’d Phædra;  
 He summons Phædra to the bar of Minos:



Thou too shalt there appear ; to torture thee  
Whole hell shall be employ'd, and suff'ring Phædra  
Shall find some ease, to see thee still more wretched.

*Lyc.* O all ye pow'rs ! O Phædra ! hear me, hear me ;  
" By all my zeal, by all my anxious cares,  
" By those unhappy crimes I wrought to serve you,"  
By these old wither'd limbs, and hoary hairs,  
By all my tears—O heav'ns ! she minds me not ;  
She hears not my complaints. O wretched Lycon !  
To what art thou reserv'd ?

*Phæd.* Reserv'd to all  
The sharpest, slowest pains that earth can furnish,  
To all I wish—On Phædra—Guards, secure him.

*Guards enter. LYCON carried off.*

Ha, Theseus !—Gods ! my freezing blood congeals,  
And all my thoughts, designs, and words are lost.

*THESEUS enters.*

*Thes.* Dost thou at last repent ? O lovely Phædra !  
At last with equal ardor meet my vows.  
" O dear-bought blessing !—Yet I'll not complain,  
" Since now my sharpest grief is all o'er paid,  
" And only heightens joy.—Then haste, my charmer,  
" Let's feast our famish'd souls with amorous riot,  
" With fiercest bliss atone for our delay,  
" And in a moment love the age we've lost."

*Phæd.* Stand off ; approach me, touch me not ; fly hence,  
Far as the distant skies or deepest centre.

*Thes.* Amazement ! death ! Ye gods who guide the world,  
What can this mean ? " So fierce a detestation,  
" So strong abhorrence !—Speak, exquisite tormentor !  
" Was it for this your summons fill'd my soul

“ With eager raptures, and tumultuous transports ?

“ Ev’n painful joys, and agonies of bliss.”

Did I for this obey my Phædra’s call,

And fly with trembling haste to meet her arms ?

And am I thus receiv’d ? O cruel Phædra !

“ Was it for this you rouz’d my drowzy soul

“ From all the dull lethargy of hopeless love ?

“ And dost thou only shew those beauteous eyes

“ To wake despair, and blast me with their beams ?

“ *Phæd.* Oh, were that all to which the gods have doom’d  
me !

“ But angry heav’n has laid in store for Theseus

“ Such perfect mischief, such transcendent woe,

“ That the black image shocks my frightened soul,

“ And the words die on my reluctant tongue.

“ *Thes.* Fear not to speak it, that harmonious voice

“ Will make the saddest tale of sorrow pleasing,

“ And charm the grief it brings. Thus let me hear it,

“ Thus in thy sight ; thus gazing on those eyes

“ I can support the utmost spite of fate,

“ And stand the rage of heav’n.—Approach, my fair.”

*Phæd.* Off ; or I fly for ever from thy sight :

Shall I embrace the father of Hippolitus ?

*Thes.* Forget the villain ; drive him from your soul.

“ *Phæd.* Can I forget, or drive him from my soul ?

“ Oh ! he will still be present to my eyes ;

“ His words will ever echo in my ears ;

“ Still will he be the torture of my days,

“ Bane of my life, and ruin of my glory.

“ *Thes.* And mine and all. O most abandon’d villain !

“ O lasting scandal to our godlike race !

“ That could contrive a crime so foul as incest.

“ *Phæd.* Incest ! Oh, name it not !

" The very mention shakes my inmost soul ;  
 " The gods are startled in their peaceful mansions ;  
 " And nature sickens at the shocking sound.  
 " Thou brutal wretch ! thou execrable monster !  
 " To break thro' all the laws that early flow  
 " From untaught reason, and distinguish man ;  
 " Mix like the senseless herd with bestial lust,  
 " Mother and son preposterously wicked ;  
 " To banish from thy soul the reverence due  
 " To honour, nature, and the genial bed,  
 " And injure one so great, so good as Theseus !

*Thes.* To injure one so great, so good as Phædra."

O slave ! to wrong such purity as thine ;  
 Such dazzling brightness, such exalted virtue.

*Phæd.* Virtue ! all-seeing gods, ye know my virtue.

Must I support all this ? O righteous Heav'n !

Can't I yet speak ? Reproach I could have borne,  
 Pointed his satire's stings, and edg'd his rage :  
 But to be prais'd——Now, Minos, I defy thee ;  
 Ev'n all thy dreadful magazines of pains—  
 Stones, furies, wheels, are slight to what I suffer,  
 And hell itself's relief.

*Thes.* What's hell to thee ?

" What crimes could'st thou commit ? or what reproaches  
 " Could innocence so pure as Phædra's fear ?  
 " Oh ! thou'rt the chastest matron of thy sex,  
 " The fairest pattern of excelling virtue.  
 " Our latest annals shall record thy glory,  
 " The maid's example, and the matron's theme.  
 " Each skilful artist shall express thy form  
 " In animated gold. The threat'ning sword  
 " Shall hang for ever o'er thy snowy bosom ;  
 " Such heav'nly beauty on thy face shall bloom

" As shall almost excuse the villain's crime ;  
 " But yet that firmness, that unshaken virtue,  
 " As still shall make the monster more detested.  
 " Where'er you pass, the crowded way shall sound  
 " With joyful cries, and endless acclamations.  
 " And when aspiring bards in daring strains  
 " Shall raise some heav'nly matron to the pow'rs,  
 " They'll say, She's great, she's true, she's chaste as Phædra.  
 " *Pbæd.* This might have been—But now, O cruel stars !  
 " Now as I pass, the crowded way shall sound  
 " With hissing scorn, and murm'ring detestation.  
 " The latest annals shall record my shame ;  
 " And when th' avenging Muse with pointed rage  
 " Would sink some impious woman down to hell,  
 " She'll say, She's false, she's base, she's foul as Phædra.  
 " *Tbes.* Hadst thou been foul, had horrid violation  
 Cast any stains on purity like thine,  
 They're wash'd already in the villain's blood :  
 The very sword, his instrument of horror,  
 " Ere this time drench'd in his incestuous heart,"  
 Hath done thee justice, " and aveng'd the crimes,  
 " He us'd it to perform."

*A Messenger enters.*

*Mess.* Alas ! my lord,  
 Ere this the prince is dead. I saw Cratander  
 Give him a sword ; I saw him boldly take it,  
 Rear it on high, and point it to his breast :  
 With steady hands, and with disdainful looks,  
 As one that fear'd not death, but scorn'd to die,  
 And not in battle.—A loud clamour follow'd :  
 And the surrounding soldiers hid from sight,  
 But all pronounc'd him dead.

*Phæd.* Is he then dead?

*Thes.* Yes, yes, he's dead; and dead by my command.  
And in this dreadful act of mournful justice  
I'm more renown'd than in my dear-bought laurels.

*Phæd.* Then thou'rt renown'd indeed.—O happy Theseus!  
Oh, only worthy of the love of Phædra!  
Haste then, let's join our well-met hands together,  
Unite for ever, and defy the gods  
To shew a pair so eminently wretched.

*Thes.* Wretched! for what? for what the world must  
praise me;  
For what the nations shall adore my justice,  
A villain's death.

*Phæd.* Hippolitus a villain!  
Oh, he was all his god-like sire could wish,  
The pride of Theseus, and the hopes of Crete.  
Nor did the bravest of his godlike race  
Tread with such early hopes the paths of honour.

*Thes.* What can this mean? declare, ambiguous Phædra;  
“ Say, whence these shifting gusts of clashing rage?  
“ Why are thy doubted speeches dark and troubled,  
“ As Cretan seas when vex'd by warring winds?”  
Why is a villain, with alternate passion,  
Accus'd and prais'd, detested and deplor'd?

*Phæd.* Canst thou not guess?  
Canst thou not read it in my furious passions?  
In all the wild disorders of my soul?  
Could'st thou not see it in the noble warmth  
That urg'd the darling youth to acts of honour?  
“ Could'st thou not find it in the gen'rous truth,  
“ Which sparkled in his eyes, and open'd in his face?”  
Could'st thou not perceive it in the chaste reserve,



In every word and look, each godlike act,  
Could'st thou not see Hippolitus was guiltless?

*Thes.* Guiltless! O all ye gods! what can this mean?

*Phæd.* Mean! that the guilt is mine, that virtuous Phædra,  
The maid's example, and the matron's theme,  
With bestial passion woo'd your loathing son.  
And when deny'd, with impious accusation  
Sullied the lustre of his shining honour:  
Of my own crimes accus'd the faultless youth,  
And with ensnaring wiles destroy'd that virtue  
I tried in vain to shake.

*Then.* Is he then guiltless?

Guiltless! then what art thou? and oh, just Heav'n!  
What a detested parricide is Theseus?

*Phæd.* What am I? what indeed, but one more black  
Than earth or hell e'er bore! "O horrid mixture  
"Of crimes and woes, of parricide and incest,  
"Perjury, murder; to arm the erring father  
"Against the guiltless son!" O impious Lycon,  
In what a hell of woes thy arts have plung'd me!

*Thes.* Lycon!—Here, guards.—O most abandon'd villain!  
Secure him, seize him, drag him piece-meal hither.

*Guards enter.*

*Gua.* Who has, my Lord, incurr'd your high displeasure?

*Thes.* Who can it be, ye gods, but perjur'd Lycon!  
Who can inspire such storms of rage, but Lycon!  
Where has my sword left one so black, but Lycon!  
Where, wretched Theseus! in thy bed and heart,  
The very darling of my soul and eyes.  
O beauteous fiend! But trust not to thy form.  
"You too, my son, was fair; your manly beauties  
"Charm'd ev'ry heart (O Heav'ns!) to your destruction;

“ You too were good; your virtuous soul abhorr’d  
 “ The crimes for which you died. O impious Phædra!”  
 Incestuous fury! execrable murd’ress!  
 Is there revenge on earth, or pain in hell,  
 Can art invent, or boiling rage suggest,  
 Ev’n endless torture, which thou shalt not suffer?

*Phæd.* And is there aught on earth I would not suffer?  
 Oh, were there vengeance equal to my crimes,  
 Thou need’st not claim it, most unhappy youth,  
 From any hands but mine; t’avenge thy fate  
 I’d court the fiercest pains, “ and sue for tortures,”  
 And Phædra’s suff’rings should atone for thine;  
 Ev’n now I fall a victim to thy wrongs;  
 Ev’n now a fatal draught works out my soul;  
 Ev’n now it curdles in my shrinking veins  
 The lazy blood, and freezes at my heart.

*LYCON brought in.*

*Thes.* Hast thou escap’d my wrath? Yet, impious Lycon,  
 On thee I’ll empty all my hoard of vengeance,  
 And glut my boundless rage.

*Lyc.* O mercy, mercy!

*Thes.* Such thou shalt find as thy best deeds deserve;  
 “ Such as thy guilty soul can hope from Theseus;  
 “ Such as thou shewd’st to poor Hippolitus.”

*Lyc.* “ Oh! chain me; whip me; let me be the scorn  
 “ Of sordid rabbles, and insulting crowds!”  
 Give me but life, and make that life most wretched.

“ *Phæd.* Art thou so base, so spiritless a slave?  
 “ Not so the lovely youth thy arts have ruin’d;  
 “ Not so he bore the fate to which you doom’d him.

“ *Thes.* O abject villain!—Yet it gives me joy  
 “ To see the fears that shake thy guilty soul,

" Enhance thy crimes, and antedate thy woes.  
 " Oh, how thou'lt howl thy fearful soul away!  
 " While laughing crowds shall echo to thy cries,  
 " And make thy pains their sport. Haste, hence, away  
 with him."

*Thes.* Drag him to all the torments earth can furnish;  
 Let him be rack'd and gash'd, impal'd alive;  
 Then let the mangled monster, fix'd on high,  
 Grin o'er the shouting crowds, and glut their vengeance.  
*Hence! away!* [Lycon borne off.

And is this all? and art thou now appeas'd?  
 Will this atone for poor Hippolitus?  
 O ungorg'd appetite! O rav'nous thirst  
 Of a son's blood! what, not a day, a moment?

*Phæd.* A day, a moment! oh, thou should'st have staid  
 Years, ages, all the round of circling time,  
 Ere touch the life of that consummate youth.

*Thes.* And yet with joy I flew to his destruction;  
 Boasted his fate, and triumph'd in his ruin.  
 Not this I promis'd to his dying mother,  
 When in her mortal pangs she sighing gave me  
 The last cold kisses from her trembling lips,  
*Her last words now fault'ring from her tongue,*  
 " And reach'd her feeble wand'ring hands to mine;  
 " When her last breath, now quiv'ring at her mouth,"  
 Implor'd my goodness to her lovely son,  
 To her Hippolitus. He, alas! descends  
 An early victim to the lazy shades,  
 (O Heav'n and earth!) by Theseus doom'd, descends.

*Phæd.* He's doom'd by Theseus, but accus'd by Phædra;  
 By Phædra's madness, and by Lycon's hatred.  
 Yet with my life I expiate my phrenzy,  
 And die for thee my headlong rage destroy'd.

" Thee I pursue, (O great ill-fated youth!)  
" Pursue thee still, but now with chaste desires ;  
" Thee through the dismal waste of gloomy death,  
" Thee thro' the glimm'ring dawn, and purer day,  
" Thro' all th'Elysian plains—O righteous Minos!  
" Elysian plains! There he and his Ismena  
" Shall sport for ever, shall for ever drink  
" Immortal love ; while I far off shall howl  
" In lonely plains ; while all the blackest ghosts  
" Shrink from the baleful sight of one more monstrous,  
" And more accurst than they."

*Thes.* I too must die ;

I too must once more see the burning shore  
Of livid Acheron and black Cocytus,  
Whence no Alcides will release me now.

*Phed.* Then why this stay? come on, let's plunge together.

See, hell sets wide its adamantine gates ;  
" See, thro' the sable gates the black Cocytus  
" In smoaky circles rolls its fiery waves ;"  
Hear, hear the stunning harmonies of woe,  
The din of rattling chains, of clashing whips,  
Of groans, or loud complaints, of piercing shrieks,  
That wide thro' all its gloomy world resound.  
How huge Mægara stalks ! what streaming fires  
Blaze from her glaring eyes ! what serpents curl  
In horrid wreaths, and hiss around her head !  
Now, now she drags me to the bar of Minos :  
See how the awful judges of the dead  
Look stedfast hate, and horrible dismay !  
See, Minos turns away his loathing eyes ;  
" Rage choaks his struggling words ; the fatal urn  
" Drops from his trembling hand." O all ye gods !

What, Lycon here? O execrable villain!  
 Then am I still on earth! By hell I am,  
 A fury now, a scourge preserv'd for Lycon.  
 See, the just beings offer to my vengeance  
 That impious slave. Now, Lycon, for revenge:  
 Thanks, Heaven, 'tis here. I'll strike it to his heart.

[*Mistaking Theseus for Lycon, offers to stab him.*]

"Gua. Heav'ns! 'tis your lord."

Phæd. My lord! O equal Heav'n!

Must each portentous moment rise in crimes,  
 And sallying life go off in parricide?

*This glimpse of reason some indulgent god*

*Had granted me to close the scene of guilt.*

Then trust not thy slow drugs.—Thus sure of death  
 Compleat thy horrors.—And if this suffice not,  
 Thou, Minos, do the rest.

[*Stabs herself.*]

Thes. *Desp'rate to the last—in ev'ry passion furious.*

Phæd. *I ask not,*

*Nor do I hope from thee forgiveness, Theseus;*

*But yet amidst my crimes remember still,*

*That my offence was not my nature's fault.*

*The wrath of Venus, which pursues our race,*

*First kindled in my breast those guilty fires.*

*Resistless goddess, I confess thy pow'r,*

*To thee I make libation of my blood.*

*Venus, avert thy hate—may wretched Phædra*

*Prove the last victim of her fated line.*

[*Dies.*]

Thes. "At length she's quiet," *she's dead;*

And now earth bears not such a wretch as Theseus.

"Yet I'll obey Hippolitus, and live;

"Then to the wars; and as the Corybantes,

"With clashing shields and braying trumpets, drown'd

"The cries of infant Jove, I'll stifle conscience,



“ And Nature’s murmurs, in the din of arms.  
 “ But what are arms to me? is he not dead  
 “ For whom I fought? for whom my hoary age  
 “ Glow’d with the boiling heat of youth in battle?”  
 How then to drag a wretched life beneath  
 An endless round of still-returning woes,  
 And all the gnawing pangs of vain remorse!  
 What torment’s this?—Therefore, O greatly thought!  
 Therefore do justice on thyself, and live;  
 Live above all most infinitely wretched.  
 Ismena too——Nay then, avenging Heav’n

ISMENA enters.

Has vented all its rage:——O wretched maid!  
 Why dost thou come to swell my raging grief?  
 “ Why add to sorrows, and embitter woes?  
 “ Why do thy mournful eyes upbraid my guilt?”  
 Why thus recal to my afflicted soul  
 The sad remembrance of my godlike son,  
 Of that dear youth my cruelty has murder’d?  
 O gods, your reddest bolts of fire  
 Had dealt less torment to my suffering frame  
 Than that destructive word bath given my heart.  
 Life yields beneath the sound.

“ *Ism.* Ruin’d! O all ye pow’rs! O awful Theseus!  
 “ Say, where’s my lord? say, where has fate dispos’d him?  
 “ O speak! the fear distracts me.  
 “ *Thes.* Gods! can I speak?  
 “ Can I declare his fate to his Ismena!  
 “ O lovely maid! could’st thou admit of comfort,  
 “ Thou should’st for ever be my only care,  
 “ Work of my life, and labour of my soul.  
 “ For thee alone my sorrows, lull’d, shall cease,

" Cease for a while to mourn my murder'd son ;  
 " For thee alone my sword once more shall rage,  
 " Restore the crown of which it robb'd your race.  
 " Then let your grief give way to thoughts of empire ;  
 " At thy own Athens reign. The happy crowd  
 " Beneath the easy yoke with pleasure bow,  
 " And think in thee their own Minerva reigns.  
 " *Ism.* Must I then reign, nay, must I live without him ?  
 " Not so, O godlike youth ! you lov'd Ismena :  
 " You, for her sake, refus'd the Cretan empire,  
 " And yet a nobler gift, the royal Phædra.  
 " Shall I then take a crown, a guilty crown,  
 " From the relentless hand that doom'd thy death ?  
 " Oh ! 'tis in death alone I can have ease,  
 " And thus I find it. [Offers to stab herself.]

HIPPOLITUS enters.

" *Hip.* O forbear Ismena !  
 " Forbear, chaste maid, to wound thy tender bosom.  
 " O Heav'n and earth ! should she resolve to die,  
 " And snatch all beauty from the widow'd earth !  
 " Was it for me, ye gods ! she'd fall a victim ?  
 " Was it for me she'd die ? O heav'nly virgin !

*Revive, Ismena,*

*Return to light, to happiness, and love.*

See, see thy own Hippolitus, who lives,  
 And hopes to live for thee.

*Ism.* Hippolitus !

" Am I alive or dead ? is this Elysium ?  
 " 'Tis he, 'tis all Hippolitus. Art well ?  
 " Art thou not wounded ?

*Thes.* " O unhop'd-for joy !"

Stand off, and let me fly into his arms.

Speak, say, what god, what miracle preserv'd thee?  
Didst thou not strike thy father's cruel present,  
My sword, into thy breast?

*Hip.* I aim'd it there;

But turn'd it from myself, and slew Cratander:

The guards, not trusted with his fatal orders,  
Granted my wish, and brought me to the king.  
I fear'd not death, but could not bear the thought  
Of Theseus' sorrow, and Ismena's loss;  
Therefore I hasten'd to your royal presence,  
Here to receive my doom.

*Thes.* Be this thy doom,

To live for ever in Ismena's arms.

Go, heav'nly pair, and with your dazzling virtues,  
Your courage, truth, your innocence and love,  
Amaze and charm mankind; and rule that empire,  
For which in vain your rival fathers fought.

*Is.* O killing joy!"

*Hip.* O ecstasy of bliss!

Am I possess'd at last of my Ismena?

"Of that celestial maid, O pitying gods!

"How shall I thank your bounties for my sufferings,

"For all my pains, and all the pangs I've borne?

"Since 'twas to them I owe divine Ismena,

"To them I owe the dear consent of Theseus."

Yet there's a pain lies heavy on my heart,

For the disastrous fate of hapless Phædra!

*Thes.* Deep was her anguish; for the wrongs she did you  
She chose to die, and in her death deplor'd  
Your fate, and not her own.

*Hip.* "I've heard it all." *Unhappy Phædra!*

"Oh! had not passion sully'd her renown,

"None e'er on earth had shone with equal lustre!

“ So glorious liv’d, or so lamented died.  
“ Her faults were only faults of raging love;  
“ Her virtues all her own.

“ *Ism.* Unhappy Phædra!

“ Was there no other way, ye pitying pow’rs,  
“ No other way to crown Ismena’s love?  
“ Then must I ever mourn her cruel fate,  
“ And in the midst of my triumphant joy,  
“ Ev’n in my hero’s arms, confess some sorrow.”

*Thes.* “ O tender maid! forbear, with ill-tim’d grief,  
“ To damp our blessings, and incense the gods;”  
But let’s away, and pay kind Heav’n our thanks  
For all the wonders in our favour wrought;  
That Heav’n, whose mercy rescu’d erring Theseus  
From execrable crimes, and endless woes.  
Then learn from me, ye kings that rule the world:  
With equal poise let steady justice sway,  
And flagrant crimes with certain vengeance pay;  
But till the proofs are clear, the stroke delay.

“ *Hip.* The righteous gods, that innocence require,  
“ Protect the goodness which themselves inspire;  
“ Unguarded virtue human arts defies,  
“ Th’ accus’d is happy, while th’ accuser dies.”

[*Exeunt omnes.*]



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## EPILOGUE.

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BY MR. PRIOR.

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*LADIES, to-night your pity I implore  
For one who never troubled you before :  
An Oxford man, extremely read in Greek,  
Who from Eu—ripides makes Phædra speak :  
And comes to town to let us moderns know  
How women lov'd two thousand years ago.  
If that be all, said I, e'en burn your play,  
Egad, we know all that as well as they :  
Shew us the youthful handsome charioteer,  
Firm in his seat, and running his career ;  
Our souls would kindle with as generous flames  
As e'er inspir'd the ancient Grecian dames :  
Ev'ry Ismena would resign her breast,  
And ev'ry dear Hippolitus be blest.*

*But, as it is, six flouncing Flanders mares  
Are e'en as good as any two of theirs ;  
And if Hippolitus can but contrive  
To buy the gilded chariot, John can drive.  
Now of the bustle you have seen to-day,  
And Phædra's morals in this scholar's play ;  
Something, at last, in justice, should be said,  
But this Hippolitus so fills one's head.—  
Well ! Phædra liv'd as chastly as she cou'd,  
For she was father Jove's own flesh and blood ;  
Her awkward love, indeed, was oddly fated,  
She and her Poly were too near related ;  
And yet that scruple had been laid aside,  
If honest Theseus had but fairly dy'd :*



*But when he came, what needed he to know,  
But that all matters stood in statu quo :  
There was no harm, you see ; or grant there were,  
She might want conduct, but he wanted care.  
'Twas in a husband little less than rude,  
Upon his wife's retirement to intrude :  
He should have sent a night or two before,  
That he would come exact at such an hour ;  
Then he had turn'd all tragedy to jest,  
Found ev'ry thing contribute to his rest ;  
The picquet friend dismiss'd, the coast all clear,  
And spouse alone, impatient for her dear.*

*But if these gay reflections come too late  
To keep the guilty Phædra from her fate,  
If your more serious judgment must condemn  
The dire effects of her unhappy flame ;  
Yet, ye chaste matrons, and ye tender fair,  
Let love and innocence engage your care ;  
My spotless flames to your protection take,  
And spare poor Phædra for Ismena's sake.*

